

The
Brothers

Tragedy in 5 acts

By
Dr Young

1777

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BELL'S EDITION.

THE
BROTHERS.

A TRAGEDY,

As written by Dr. YOUNG.

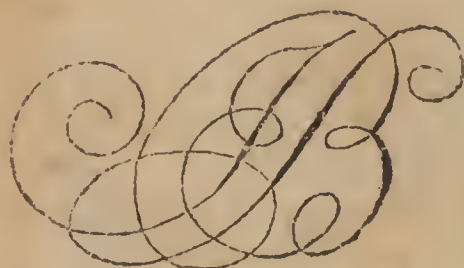
DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE
VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. HOPKINS, Prompter.



L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCCLXXVII.

P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr. DODSLEY.

THE tragic muse, revolving many a page,
 Of Time's long records drawn from every age,
 Forms not her plans on low or trivial deeds,
 But marks the striking!—When some hero bleeds
 To save his country, then her powers inspire,
 And souls congenial catch the patriot fire.——
 When bold Oppression grinds a suffering land;
 When the keen dagger gleams in Murder's hand;
 When black Conspiracy infects the throng;
 Or fell Revenge sits brooding o'er his wrong;
 Then walks she forth in terror; at her frown
 Guilt shrinks appall'd, tho' seated on a throne.
 But the rack'd soul when dark suspicions rend,
 When brothers hate. and sons with fires contend;
 When clashing interests war eternal wage;
 And love, the tenderest passion, turns to rage;
 Then grief on every visage stands impress'd,
 And pity throbs in every feeling breast;
 Hope, fear, and indignation rise by turns,
 And the strong scene with various passion burns,
 Such is our tale.——Nor blush if tears should flow:
 They're Virtue's tribute paid to human woe.
 Such drops new lustre to bright eyes impart;
 The silent witness of a tender heart:
 Such drops adorn the noblest hero's cheek,
 And paint his worth in strokes that more than speak:
 Not he who cannot weep, but he who can,
 Shews the great soul, and proves himself a man.
 Yet do not idly grieve at others' pain,
 Nor let the tears of Nature fall in vain:
 Watch the close crimes from whence their ills have grown,
 And from their frailties learn to mend your own.

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ.

M E N.

<i>Philip</i> , King of Macedon,	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>
<i>Perseus</i> , his elder son,	Mr. Berry.
<i>Demetrius</i> , his younger son,	Mr. Moliop.
<i>Pericles</i> , the friend of <i>Perseus</i> ,	Mr. Garrick.
<i>Antigonus</i> , a minister of state,	Mr. Blakes.
<i>Dymas</i> , the King's favourite,	Mr. Burton.
<i>Posthumius</i> , }	Mr. Simson.
<i>Curtius</i> , } <i>Roman Ambassadors,</i>	{ Mr. Winstone.
	{ Mr. Mozeen.

W O M E N.

<i>Erixene</i> , the <i>Thracian Princess</i> ,	Mrs. Bellamy.
Her Attendant. ———	Miss Hippisley.

T H E
B R O T H E R S.

* * The lines distinguished by inverted comas, 'thus,' are omitted in the representation.

A C T I.

Enter Curtius and Posthumius.

CURTIUS.

THERE's something of magnificence about us
I have not seen at Rome. But you can tell me:
[Gazes round.]

Post. True : hither sent on former embassies,
I know this splendid court of Macedon,
And haughty Philip, well.

Cur. His pride presumes
To treat us here like subjects, more than Romans,
More than ambassadors, who, in our bosoms,
Bear peace and war, and throw him which we please,
As Jove his storm, or sunshine, on his creatures.

Post. This Philip only, since Rome's glory rose,
Preserves its grandeur to the name of King ;
Like a bold star, that shews its fires by day.
The Greek, who won the world, was sent before him,
As the grey dawn before the blaze of noon :
Philip had ne'er been conquered, but by Rome ;
And what can fame say more of mortal man ?

Cur. I know his public character.

Post. It pains me
To turn my thought on his domestic state.
There Philip is no god ; but pours his heart ;
In ceaseless groans, o'er his contending sons ;
And pays the secret tax of mighty men
To their mortality.

A 3.

Cur.

Cur. But whence this strife,
Which thus afflicts him ?

Post. From this Philip's bed
Two Alexanders spring.

Cur. And but one world ?
'Twill never do.

Post. They both are bright ; but one
Benignly bright, as stars to mariners ;
And one a comet, with malignant blaze,
Denouncing ruin.

Cur. You mean Perseus.

Post. True.

The younger son Demetrius, you well know,
Was bred at Rome, our hostage from his father.
Soon after, he was sent ambassador,
When Philip fear'd the thunder of our arms.
Rome's manners won him, and his manners Rome ;
Who granted peace, declaring she forgave,
To his high worth, the conduct of his father.
This gave him all the hearts of Macedon ;
Which, join'd to his high patronage from Rome,
Inflames his jealous brother.

Cur. Glows there not
A second brand of enmity ?

Post. O yes ;
The fair Erixene.

Cur. I've partly heard
Her smother'd story.

Post. Smother'd by the King ;
And wisely too : but thou shalt hear it all.
Not seas of adamant, not mountains whelm'd
On guilty secrets, can exclude the day.
Long burnt a fix'd hereditary hate,
Between the crowns of Macedon and Thrace ;
The sword by both too much indulg'd in blood.
Philip, at length, prevail'd ; he took, by night,
The town, and palace, of his deadly foe ;
Rush'd thro' the flames, which he had kindled round,
And slew him, bold in vain : nor rested there ;
But, with unkingly cruelty, destroy'd
Two little sons within their mother's arms ;
Thus meaning to tread out those sparks of war,

Which

Which might one day flame up to strong revenge.
 'The Queen, thro' grief, on her dead sons expir'd.
 One child alone surviv'd; a female infant,
 Amidst these horrors, in the cradle smil'd.

Cur. What of that infant?

Post. Stung with sharp remorse,
 The victor took, and gave her to his queen.
 The child was bred, and honour'd as her own;
 She grew, she bloom'd; and now her eyes repay
 Her brother wounds, on Philip's rival sons.

Cur. Is then Erixe'ne that Thracian child?
 How just the gods! from out that ruin'd house
 He took a brand, to set his own on fire.

Post. To give thee, friend, the whole in miniature;
 This is the picture of great Philip's court:
 The proud, but melancholy King, on high,
 Majestic sits, like Jove, enthron'd in darkness;
 His sons are as the thunder in his hand;
 And the fair Thracian princess is a star,
 That sparkles by, and gilds the solemn scene.

[*Shouts heard.*]

'Tis their great day, supreme of all their year,
 The fam'd lustration of their martial powers;
 Thence, for our audience, chosen by the King.
 If he provokes a war, his empire shakes,
 And all her lofty glories nod to ruin.

Cur. Who comes?

Post. O, that's the jealous elder brother;
 Irregular in manners, as in form.
 Observe the fire, high birth, and empire, kindle!

Cur. He holds his conference with much emotion.

Post. The brothers both can talk, and, in their turns
 Have borne away the prize of eloquence
 At Athens. Shun his walk: Our own debate
 Is now at hand. We'll seek his lion fire,
 Who dares to frown on us, his conquerors;
 And carries so much monarch on his brow,
 As if he'd fright us with the wounds we gave him.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Perseus and Pericles.

Per. 'Tis empire! empire! empire! let that word
 Make sacred all I do, or can attempt!

Had

Had I been born a slave, I should affect it ;
 My nature's fiery, and, of course, aspires.
 Who gives an empire, by the gift defeats
 All end of giving ; and procures contempt
 Instead of gratitude. An empire lost,
 Destroy'd, would less confound me, than resign'd.

Peri. But are you sure Demetrius will attempt ?

Per. Why does Rome court him ? For his virtues ? No.
 To fire him to dominion : to blow up
 A civil war ; then to support him in it :
 He gains the name of King, and Rome the power.

Peri. This is indeed the common art of Rome.

Per. That source of justice thro' the wond'ring world !
 His youth and valour second Rome's designs :
 The first impels him to presumptuous hope ;
 The last supports him in it. Then his person !
 Thy hand, O Nature, has made bold with mine
 Yet more ; what words distil from his red lip,
 To gull the multitude ! and they make Kings.
 Ten thousand fools, knaves, cowards, lump'd together,
 Become all wise, all righteous, and almighty.
 Nor is this all : the foolish Thracian maid
 Prefers the boy to me.

Peri. And does that pain you ?

Per. O Pericles, to death. It is most true,
 Thro' hate to him, and not thro' love for her,
 I paid my first addresses ; but became
 The fool I feign'd : my sighs are now sincere.
 It smarts ; it burns : O that 'twere fiction still !
 By Heaven, she seems more beauteous than dominion !

Peri. Dominion, and the princess, both are lost,
 Unless you gain the King.

Per. But how to gain him ?

Old men love novelties ; the last arriv'd
 Still pleases best ; the youngest steals their smiles.

Peri. Dymas alone can work him to his pleasure ;
 First in esteem, and keeper of his heart.

Per. To Dymas thou ; and win him to thy will.
 In the mean time, I'll seek my double rival ;
 Curb his presumption, and erect myself,
 In all the dignity of birth before him.
 Whate'er can stir the blood, or sway the mind,

THE BROTHERS.

9

Is now at stake ; and double is the loss,
When an inferior bears away the prize.

Peri. Your brother, dress'd for the solemnity.

Per. To Dymas fly ! gain him, and think on this :
A prince indebted, is a fortune made. [Exit *Per.*

Enter Demetrius.

Dem. How, brother ! unattir'd ! Have you forgot
What pomps are due to this illustrious day ?

Per. I am no gew-gaw, for the throne to gaze at :
Some are design'd by nature but for shew ;
The tinsel and the feather of mankind.

Dem. Brother, of that no more : for shame, gird on
Your glitt'ring arms, and look like any Roman.

Per. No, brother, let the Romans look like me,
If they're ambitious.—But, I pr'ythee, stand ;
Let me gaze on thee :——No inglorious figure !

More Romano, as it ought to be.

But what is this that dazzles my weak sight ?

'There's sunshine in thy beaver.

Dem. 'Tis that helmet
Which Alexander wore at Granicus.

Per. When he subdu'd the world ? Ha ! is't not so ?
What world hast thou subdu'd ? O yes, the fair.
Think'st thou there could in Macedon be found
No brow might suit that golden blaze, but thine ?

Dem. I wore it but to grace this sacred day :
Jar not for trifles.

Per. Nothing is a trifle
That argues the presumption of the soul.

Dem. 'Tis they presume who know not to deserve.

Per. Or who, deserving, scorn superior merit.

Dem. Who combats with a brother, wounds himself ;
Wave private wrath, and rush upon the foes
Of Macedonia.

Per. No ; I would not wound
Demetrius' friends.

Dem. Demetrius' friends !

Per. The Romans.

You copy Hannibal, our great ally :
Say, at what altar was you sworn their foe ?
Peace-making brother ! Wherefore bring you peace,

But

But to prevent my glory from the field ?

The 'peace you bring, was meant as war to me.

Dem. Perseus, be bold when danger's all your own :
War now, were war with Philip more than Rome.

Per. Come, you love peace ; that fair cheek hates a
scar.

You that admire the Romans, break the bridge
With Cocles, or with Curtius leap the gulph ;
And league not with the vices of our foes.

Dem. What vices ?

Per. With their women, and their wits.
Your idol Lælius, Lælius the polite.
I hear, Sir, you take wing, and mount in metre.
Terence has own'd your aid, your comrade Terence.
God-like ambition ! Terence there, the slave !

Dem. At Athens bred, and to the arts a foe ?

Per. At Athens bred, and borrow arts from Rome ?

Dem. Brother, I've done : let our contention cease :
Our mother shudders at it in her grave.
And how has Philip mourn'd ? a dreadful foe,
And awful King ; but O, the tend'rest parent
That ever wept in fondness o'er a child !

Per. Why, ay, go tell your father ; fondly throw
Your arms around him ; stroke him to your purpose,
As you are wont ; I boast not so much worth ;
I am no picture, by the doating eye
To be survey'd, and hung about his neck.
I fight his battles ; that's all I can do.
But if you boast a piety sincere ;
One way you may secure your father's peace ;
And one alone—resign Erixene.

Dem. You flatter me, to think her in my power.
We run our fates together ; you deserve,
And she can judge ; proceed we then like friends,
And he who gains her heart, and gains it fairly,
Let him enjoy his gen'rous rival's too.

Per. Smooth-speaking, unsincere, insulting boy !
Is then my crown usurp'd but half thy crime ?
Desist ; or by the gods that smile on blood !
Not thy fine form, nor yet thy boasted peace,
Nor patronizing Rome, nor Philip's tears,
Nor Alexander's helmet ; no, nor more,
His radiant form, should it alight in thunder,

And

And spread its new divinity between us,
Should save a brother from a brother's fury. [*Exit.*]

Dem. How's this? the waves ne'er ran thus high before.
Resign thee! yes, Erixene, with life.
Thou in whose eyes, so modest, and so bright,
Love ever wakes, and keeps a vestal fire.
Ne'er shall I wean my fond, fond heart from thee.
But Perseus warns me to rouse all my powers.
As yet I float in dark uncertainty;
For tho' she smiles, I found not her designs:
I'll fly, fall, tremble, weep upon her feet;
And learn (O all ye gods!) my final doom!
My father! ha! and on his brow deep thought,
And pale concern! Kind Heav'n assuage his sorrows,
Which strike a damp thro' all my flames of love. [*Exit.*]

Enter King and Antigonus.

King. Kings of their envy cheat a foolish world;
' Fate gives us all in spite, that we alone
' Might have the pain of knowing all is nothing.
' The seeming means of bliss but heighten woe,
' When impotent to make their promise good:
' Hence, kings, at least, bid fairest to be wretched.'

Ant. True, Sir; 'tis empty, or tormenting, all,
The days of life are sisters; all alike.
None just the same; which serves to fool us on
'Thro' blasted hopes, with change of fallacy:
While joy is like to-morrow, still to come;
Nor ends the fruitless chace but in the grave.

King. Ay, there, Antigonus, this pain will cease,
' Which meets me at my banquet; haunts my pillow;
' Nor, by the din of arms, is frightened from me.'
Conscience, what art thou? thou tremendous power!
Who dost inhabit us without our leave;
And art, within ourselves, another self,
A master self, that loves to domineer
And treat the monarch frankly as the slave.
How dost thou light a torch to distant deeds?
Make the past, present; and the future frown?
How, ever and anon, awake the soul,
As with a peal of thunder, to strange horrors,
In this long restless dream, which idiots hug,
Nay, wise men flatter with the name of life?

Ant.

Ant. You think too much.

King. I do not think at all :

The gods impose, the gods inflict, my thoughts,
And paint my dreams with images of dread.
Last night, in sleep, I saw the Thracian queen,
And her two murder'd sons. She frown'd upon me,
And pointed at their wounds. How throbb'd my heart !
How shook my couch ! and when the morning came,
The formidable picture still subsisted,
And slowly vanish'd from my waking eye.
I fear some heavy vengeance hangs in air,
And conscious deities infuse these thoughts,
To warn my soul of her approaching doom.
The gods are rigid when they weigh such deeds
As speak a ruthless heart ; they measure blood
By drops ; and bate not one in the repay.
Could infants hurt me ? 'Twas not like a king.

Ant. My Lord, I do confess the gods are with us ;
Stand at our side in ev'ry act of life ;
And on our pillow watch each secret thought ;
Nay, see it in its embryo, yet unborn.
But their wrath ceases on remorse for guilt ;
And well I know your sorrows touch your sons ;
Nor is it possible but time must quench
Their flaming spirits, in a father's tears.

King. Vain comfort ! I this moment overheard
My jarring sons with fury shake my walls.
Ah ! why my curse from those who ought to bless me ?
The queen of Thrace can answer that sad question.
She had two sons ; but two : and so have I.
Misfortune stands with her bow ever bent
Over the world ; and he who wounds another,
Directs the goddess by that part he wounds,
Where to strike deep her arrows in himself.

Ant. I own, I think it time your sons receive
A father's awful counsel ; or, while here,
Now weary nature calls for kind repose,
Your curtains will be shaken with their broils ;
And, when you die, sons' blood may stain your tomb.
But other cares demand you now : the Romans.

King. O change of pain ! the Romans ? Perish Rome !
Thrice happy they who sleep in humble life,

Beneath the storm ambition blows. 'Tis meet
 The great should have the fame of happiness,
 The consolation of a little envy ;
 'Tis all their pay, for those superior cares,
 Those pangs of heart, their vassals ne'er can feel.
 Where are these strangers ? First I'll hear their tale ;
 Then talk in private with my sons.

Ant. But how

Intends my Lord to make his peace with Rome ?

King. Rome calls me fiery : let her find me so.

Ant. O, Sir, forbear ! Too late you felt Rome's power.

King. Yes, and that reason stings me more than ever ;
 To curse, and hate, and hazard all against her.

Ant. Hate her too much to give her battle now ;
 Nor to your god-like valour owe your ruin.
 Greece, Thessaly, Illyrium, Rome has seiz'd ;
 Your treasures wasted, and your phalanx thinn'd ;
 Should she proceed, and strike at Macedon,
 What would be left of empire ?

King. Philip : all.

I'll take my throne. Send in these foreigners.

SCENE *draws, and discovers a magnificent Throne, Perseus, Demetrius, Courtiers, &c. attending. Posthumius and Curtius, the Roman Ambassadors, enter. Trumpets sound. The King ascends the Throne.*

Post. Philip of Macedon, to those complaints
 Our friends groan out, and you have heard at large,
 Rome now expects an answer. She sits judge,
 And will have right on earth.

King. Expects an answer !

I so shall answer, as becomes a king.

Post. Or more, Sir ; as becomes a friend of Rome.

King. Or Alexander's heir, to rise still higher.

But to the purpose. Thus a king to those
 That would make kings, and puff them out at pleasure :
 Has Philip done amiss ? 'Twas you provok'd him.
 My cities, which deserted in my wars,
 I thought it meet to punish : you deny'd me.
 When I had shook the walls of Marena,
 You pluck'd me thence, and took the taken town.

B

Then

Then you sent word I should retire from Greece,
 A conquest at my door, by nature mine ;
 And said, Here end thy realm ; as ye were gods !
 And gods ye shall be, ere Rome humbles me.
 All this is done ; yet Philip is your friend !
 If this buys friendship, where can ye find foes ?
 In what regard will stern Rome look upon me ?
 If as a friend ; too precious let her hold
 Her own esteem, to cast a stain on mine :
 If as an enemy, let her proceed,
 And do as she has done ; she needs no more.

Post. The Romans do no wrong ; yet still are men :
 And if to-day an error thwarts their purpose,
 To-morrow sets it right. If Philip loves
 Dominion, and the pride that waits on kings,
 (Of which, perhaps, his words too strongly favour)
 Humility to Rome will lead him to it.
 She can give more than common kings can govern.

King. Than common kings ? Ambassador ! Remember
 Cannæ—Where first my sword was flush'd with blood.—

Dem. My Lord, forbear. [*Aside to the King.*]

King. And Hannibal still lives.

Post. Because he fled at Capua.

King. There, indeed,
 I was not with him.

Post. Therefore he fled alone—
 Since thus you treat us, hear another charge.
 Why here detain you, prisoner of your power,
 His daughter, who was once Rome's good ally,
 The king of Thrace ? Why is she not restor'd ?
 For our next meeting you'll provide an answer.
 What now has past, for his sake, we forgive.

[*Pointing to Demetrius.*]

But mark this well : there lies some little distance,
 Philip, between a Roman and a king. [*Exeunt Romans.*]

King. How say'st, unscepter'd boaster ! This to me !
 With Hannibal I cleft yon Alpine rocks ;
 With Hannibal choak'd Thrasymene with slaughter :
 But, O the night of Cannæ's raging field !
 When half the Roman senate lay in blood
 Without our tent, and groan'd as we carous'd !

Immor-

Immortal gods ! for such another hour !
Then throw my carcase to the dogs of Rome.

Ant. Sir, you forget your sons.

King. Let all withdraw.

[Exeunt all but the King and his Sons.]

Two passions only take up all my soul ;
Hatred to Rome, and tenderness for them.
Draw near, my sons, and listen to my age.
By what has past, you see the state of things.
Foreign alliance must a king secure ;
And insolence sustain to serve his power.
And if alliances with Rome are needful,
Much more among ourselves. If I must bear,
Unmov'd, an insult from a stranger's brow,
Shall not a brother bear a brother's look
Without impatience ? Whither all this tends,
I'm sorry that your conscious hearts can tell you :
Is it not most severe ? Two sons alone
Have crown'd my bed ; and they two are not brothers,
Look here, and, from my kind regards to you,
Copy such looks as you should bear each other.
Why do I sigh ? Do you not know, my sons ?
And if you do—O let me sigh no more !
Let these white hairs put in a claim to peace !

Per. Henceforth, my sole contention with my brother
Is this ; which best obeys our father's will.

Dem. Father, if simple Nature ever speaks
In her own language, scorning useless words,
You see her now ; she swells into my eyes.
I take thee to my heart : I fold thee in it.

[Embracing Perseus.]

Our father bids ; and that we drank one milk,
Is now the smallest motive of my love.

King. Antigonus, the joy their mother felt
When they were born, was faint to what I feel.

Dem. See, brother, if he does not weep ! His love
Runs o'er in venerable tears. I'm rude ;
But nature will prevail—My king ! My father !

Per. Now cannot I let fall a single tear.

[Aside.]

King. See ! the good man has caught it too.

Ant. Such tears,
And such alone, be shed in Macedonia !

King. Be not thou, Perseus, jealous of thy brother ;
 Nor thou, Demetrius, prone to give him cause ;
 Nor either think of empire till I'm dead.
 You need not ; you reign now ; my heart is yours.
 Sheath your resentments in your father's peace ;
 Come to my bosom both, and swear it there.

[*Embracing his Sons.*

Ant. Look down, ye gods, and change me, if you can,
 This fight for one more lovely. What so sweet,
 So beautiful, on earth, and, ah ! so rare,
 As kindred love, and family repose ?
 This, this alliance, Rome, will quite undo thee.
 See this, proud Eastern monarchs ! and look pale !
 Armies are routed, realms o'er-run by this.

King. Or if leagu'd worlds superior forces bring,
 I'd rather die a father than a king.
 Fathers alone, a father's heart can know ;
 What secret tides of still enjoyment flow,
 When brothers love : but if their hate succeeds,
 They wage the war ; but 'tis the father bleeds.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Enter Perseus.

PERSEUS.

WHY loiters my ambassador to Dymas ?
 His greatness will not sure presume to scorn
 A friendship offer'd from an heir of empire.
 But Pericles returns.

Enter Pericles.

Is Dymas ours ?

Per. He's cautious, Sir ; he's subtle ; he's a courtier.
 Dymas is now for you, now for your brother ;
 For both, and neither : he's a summer-insect,
 And loves the sunshine : on his gilded wings,
 While the scales waver, he'll fly doubtful round you ;
 And sing his flatteries to both alike ;

The

The scales once fix'd, he'll settle on the winner,
And swear his pray'rs drew down the victory——
But what success had you, Sir, with your brother?

Perf. All, all my hopes are at the point of death !
The boy triumphant keeps his hold in love :
He's ever warbling nonsense in her ear,
With all th' intoxication of success.
Darkness incloses me ; nor see I light
From any quarter dawn, but from his death.

Per. Why start at his death, who resolves on yours ?

Perf. Resolves on mine !

Per. Have you not mark'd the princess ?
You have : with what a beam of majesty
Her eye strikes sacred awe ! It speaks her mind
Exalted, as it is. Whom loves she then ?
Demetrius ? No ; Rome's darling ; who, no doubt,
Dares court her with your empire. And shall Perseus
Survive that loss—Thus he resolves your death.

Perf. Most true. What crime then to strike first ? But
Or when ? or where ? O Pericles ! assist me. [how ?

Per. 'Tis dangerous.

Perf. The fitter for me.

Per. Wait an occasion that befriends your wishes.

Perf. Go, fool, and teach a cataract to creep !
Can thirst of empire, vengeance, beauty, wait ?

Per. In the mean time, accept a stratagem
That must secure your empire, or your love.
Your brother's Roman friendships gall no less
The King, than you : he dreads their consequence.
Dymas hates Rome ; and Dymas has a daughter.
How can the King so powerfully fix
Demetrius' faith, as by his marriage there ?
For Dymas, thus, Rome's sworn, eternal foe,
Becomes a spy upon his private life,
And surety for his conduct.

Perf. True—but thus
Our art defeats itself. My brother gains
The favourite, and so strengthens in his treason.

Per. Think you, he'll wed her ? No ; the Princess'
Makes no such short-liv'd conquest. He'll refuse, [eye
And thus effect what I have strove in vain :
Yes, he'll refuse ; and Dymas, in his wrath,

Will lift for us, and vengeance—Then the King
Will doubtless, much resent his son's refusal;
And thus we kindle the whole court against him.

Perf. My precious friend, I thank thee. I take wing
On ardent hope: I think it cannot fail.
Go, make thy court to Dymas with this scheme:
Begone—Erixene!—I'll feed her pride [*Looking out.*
Once more, but not expend my breath in vain.
This meeting stamps unalterable fate,
I will wed her, or vengeance.

Enter Erixene and Delia.

O, Erixene!

O, Princess! colder than your Thracian snows!
See Perseus, who ne'er stoop'd but to the gods,
Prostrate before you. Fame, and empire sue.
Why have I conquer'd?—Because you are fair.
What's empire—but a title to adore you.
Why do I number in my lineage high
Heroes and gods?—That you, scarce less divine,
Without a blush may listen to my vows.
My ancestor subdu'd the world. I dare
Beyond his pride, and grasp at more, in you.
Obdurate maid! or turn, or I expire.

Erix. If love, my Lord, is choice, who loves in vain
Should blame himself alone; and if 'tis fate,
'Tis fate in all: Why then your blame on me?
My crown's precarious, thro' the chance of war;
But sure my heart's my own. Each villager
Is queen of her affections, and can vent
Her arbitrary sighs where-e'er she pleases.
Shall then the daughter of a race of kings——

Per. Madam, you justly blame the chance of war:
'The gods have been unkind: I am not so.
No! Perseus comes to counter-balance fate.
'Thrace ne'er was conquer'd—if you smile on me.
Silent! obdurate still! as cold as death!
But 'tis Demetrius——

Erix. Prince, I take your meaning.
But, if you truly think his worth prevail,
How strange is your request!

Perf. No, Madam, no;
'Tho' love has hurt my mind, I still can judge

What

What springs controul the passions of the great.
 Ambition is first minister of state ;
 Love's but a second in the cabiner :
 Nor can he feather there his unfledg'd shaft
 But from Ambition's wing : but you conceive
 More sanguine hopes, from him whom Rome supports,
 Than me. You view Demetrius on my throne ;
 And thence he shines indeed, his charms from thence
 Transpierce you soul, enamour'd of dominion.

Erix. Why now you shew me your profound esteem !
 Demetrius' guilt alone has charms for me ;
 'Tis not the prince, but traitor wins my love.
 Such insults are not brook'd by royal minds,
 Howe'er their fortunes ebb ; and tho' I mourn,
 An orphan, and a captive, gods there are ——
 Fear then an orphan's and a captive's wrong.

Perf. Your cruel treatment of my passion ——
 But I'll not talk. — This, Madam ; only this ——
 Think not the cause, the curst cause of all,
 Shall laugh secure, and triumph in my pangs.
 No ; by the torments of an heart on fire,
 She gluts my vengeance, who defrauds my love ! [Exit.

Erix. What have I done ? In what a whirlwind rage
 Has snatch'd him hence on ill ? I frown on Perseus
 And kill Demetrius.

Delia. Madam, see the Prince.

Enter Demetrius.

Erix. Ah, Prince ! the tempest, which so long has
 Is now full ripe, and bursting o'er your head. [lour'd,
 'This moment Perseus' malice flam'd before me ;
 Victorious rage broke thro' his wonted guard,
 And menac'd loud your ruin. Fly, O fly !
 This instant.

Dem. To what refuge ?

Erix. Rome extends
 Her longing arms to clasp you for her own.

Dem. Madam, 'tis prudent ; I confess it is :
 But is it loving as true lovers ought,
 To be so very prudent in our love ?
 I boast not so much wisdom : I prefer
 Death at your feet, before the world without you.

Erix.

Erix. In danger thus extreme——

Dem. Oh ! most lov'd !

Lov'd you like me, like me you would discern
That I but execute my brother's purpose
By such a flight. At that his clamour, rage,
And menace aim : to chase a rival hence,
And keep the field alone. Oh ! shall I leave him
To gaze whole days ; to learn to read your eye ;
To study your delights, to chide the wind's
Too rude approach ; to bid the ground be smooth ;
To follow, like your shadow, where you go ;
'Tread in your steps, perhaps—to touch your hand !
O death ! to minister in little things ;
From half a glance to prophesy your will,
And do it, ere well form'd in your own mind !
Gods ! Gods ! while worlds divide me from my princess,
That, should she call, Demetrius might grow old,
Ere he could reach her feet.

Erix. If Perseus' love

Pains you, it pains me more. Is your heart griev'd ?
Mine is tormented : but since Philip's self
Is love's great advocate, a flat refusal
But blows their rage, and hastens your destruction.
Had I not that to fear ! were you secure !
I'd ease my bosom of its full disdain,
And dash this bold presumer on his birth.
But, see ! the grand procession.

Dem. We must join it.

Enter the King, Perseus, Romans, Antigonus, &c.

King. Let the procession halt ! and here be paid,
Before yon flaming altar, thanks to Heav'n,
That brings us safe to this auspicious day !
The great lustration of our martial powers,
Which from its distant birth to present time
Unfolds the glories of this antient empire,
And throngs the pride of ages in an hour.

Post. What figure's that, O Philip ! which precedes ?

[*Pointing.*

King. The founder of our empire, furious son
Of great Alcides. We're ally'd to Heaven ;
And you, I think, call Romulus a god.——

That,

That, Philip, second of our name ; and here,
 O bend with awe to him, whose red right hand
 Hurl'd proud Darius like a star from Heaven,
 With lesser lights around him, flaming down,
 And bid the laurel'd sons of Macedonia
 Drink their own Ganges.

Perf. Give him his helmet, brother. [*Aside to Dem.*

King. You lead the troops that join in mock encounter :
 And in no other may you ever meet ! [*To his sons.*
 But march one way, and drive the world before you,
 The victor, as our antient rites decree,
 Must hold a feast, and triumph in the bowl.

Dem. I long, my Lord, to see the charge begin :
 The brandish'd faulchion, and the clashing helm,
 Tho' but in sport ; it is a sport for men.
 Raw Alexander thus began his fame,
 And overthrew Darius, first, at home.
 We'll practise o'er the plans of future conquests,
 While neighb'ring nations tremble at our play ;
 And own the fault in Fortune, not in us,
 That we but want a foe to be immortal.

Perf. You have supply'd my wants : I thank you, brother.

King. [*Rising and coming forwards. Music.*] How vain
 all outward efforts to supply

The soul with joy ! The noon-tide sun is dark,
 And music discord, when the heart is low :
 Avert its omen ! what a damp hangs on me !
 These sprightly, tuneful airs but skim along
 The surface of my soul, not enter there :
 She does not dance to this enchanting sound.
 How, like a broken instrument, beneath
 The skilful touch, my joyless heart lies dead !
 Nor answers to the master's hand divine !

Antig. When men once reach their autumn, sickly joys
 Fall off apace, as yellow leaves from trees,
 At ev'ry little breath misfortune blows ;
 Till, left quite naked of their happiness,
 In the chill blasts of winter they expire.
 This is the common lot. Have comfort then :
 Your grief will damp the triumph.

King. It is over.

Hear too ; the trumpet calls us to the field,

And

And now this phantom of a fight begins.
 Fair Princess, you and I will go together,
 As Priam and bright Helen did of old,
 To view the war. Your eyes will make them bolder,
 And raise the price of victory itself.

[*All go out but Perseus, who has observed Demetrius and Erixene all this time conversing, and stays behind thoughtful and disturbed.*

Perf. Before my face she feeds him with her smiles :
 The King looks on, nor disapproves the crime ;
 And the boy takes them as not due to me.
 Without remorse as happy as she'll make him.
 Perish all three ! I'll seek allies elsewhere ;
 Father and brother, nay, a mistress too.
 Destruction, rise ! Though thou art black as Night,
 Thy mother, and as hideous as Despair ;
 I'll clasp thee thus, nor think of woman more.
 How the boy doats, and drinks in at his eyes
 Her poison ! O to stab him in her arms !
 And yet do less than they have done to me.

Enter Pericles.

Per. Where is my prince ? The nation's on the wing,
 No bosom but exults ; no hand but bears
 A garland or a trophy : and shall Perseus —

Perf. Vengeance !

Per. Hear how with shouts they rend the skies !

[*Shout within.*

Perf. Give me my vengeance !

Per. Forty thousand men,
 In polish'd armour, shine against the sun.

Perf. Dare but another word, and not of vengeance,
 And I will use thee, as I would — my brother.

Per. Vengeance ! on whom ?

Perf. On him.

Per. What vengeance ?

Perf. Blood.

Per. 'Tis yours.

Perf. What god will give it me ?

Per. Your own right-hand.

Perf. I dare not — for my father.

Per. You shall dare.

Perf.

Perf. Shalt thou dare give encouragement to Perseus ?
Unfold thy purpose ; I'll outshoot the mark.

Per. Where are you going ?

Perf. To the mock encounter.

Per. What more like mock encounter than the true ?

Perf. Enough—He's dead ! 'Twas accident ; 'twas error :
No matter what. Ten thousand share the blame. [ror :

Per. Hold, Sir ! I had forgot : on this occasion,
'The troops are search'd ; and foils alone are worn,
Instead of swords.

Perf. An offer were enough.
Who pains my heart, plants thunder in my hand.

Per. But should this fail——

Perf. Impossible !

Per. But, should it,
The banquet follows.

Perf. Poison in his wine.
I thank the gods ! my spirits are reviv'd !
I draw immortal vigour from that bowl !

Per. Nay, should both fail, the field and banquet too,
All fails not ; fairer hopes to fair succeed :
For know, my Lord, the King receiv'd with joy
The marriage-scheme, and sent for Dymas' daughter.

Perf. Then there's a second bowl of poison for him.

Per. Yet more : this ev'ning those ambassadors,
Which Philip sent to Rome, beneath the name
Of public business, but, in truth, to learn
Your brother's conduct, are expected home.

Perf. Those whom I swore, before they parted hence,
In dreadful sacraments of wine and blood,
To bring back such reports as should destroy him :
And what if, to compleat our secret plan,
We feign a letter to his friend the consul,
To strengthen our ambassadors' report.

Per. That care, my Lord, be mine : I know a knave,
Grown fat on forgery ; he'll counterfeit
Old Quintius' hand and seal, by former letters
Sent to the King ; which you can gain with ease.

Perf. Observe—This morning, at their interview,
The Romans, in effect, inform'd the King,
That Thrace was theirs, and order'd him restore
The Princess. This will give much air of truth,

If our forg'd letters say the Romans crown
Demetrius king of Thrace and promise more.

Per. My Lord, it shall be done.

Perf. All cannot fail.

[*Trumpets.*

Per. The trumpets sound : the troops are mounted.

Perf. Vengeance !

Sweet Vengeance calls : nor ever call'd a god
Such swift obedience : like the rapid wheel
I kindle in the course ? I'm there already ;
Snatch the bright weapon ; bound into my feat ;
Strike ; triumph ; see him gasping on the ground,
And life, love, empire, springing from his wound.
When god-like ends, by means unjust, succeed,
'The great result adorns the daring deed.
Virtue's a shackle, under fair disguise,
To fetter fools, while we bear off the prize.

[*Exeunt.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

Enter Perseus.

PERSEUS.

COWARDS in ill, like cowards in the field,
Are sure to be defeated. To strike home,
In both, is prudence : guilt, begun, must fly
To guilt consummate, to be safe.

Enter Pericles.

Per. My Lord——

Perf. Disturb not my devotions ; they decline
The beaten track, the common path of pray'r——
Ye powers of darkness ! that rejoice in ill ;
All sworn by Styx, with pestilential blasts
To wither every virtue in the bud ;
To keep the door of dark conspiracy,
And snuff the grateful fumes of human blood !
From sulphur blue, or your red beds of fire,
Or your black ebon thrones, auspicious rise ;
And bursting through the barriers of this world,

Stand in dread contrast to the golden sun;
 Fright day-light hence with your infernal smiles,
 And howl aloud your formidable joy,
 While I transport you with the fair record
 Of what your faithful minister has done,
 Beyond your inspiration, self-impell'd
 To spread your empire, and secure his own.
 Hear, and applaud. Now, Pericles, proceed;
 Speak, is the letter forg'd?

Peri. This moment; and might cheat
 The cunning eye of jealousy itself.

Per. 'Tis well: Art thou appriz'd of what hath pass'd
 Since last we parted?

Peri. No, my Lord.

Per. Then rouse
 Thy whole attention: here we are in private:
 Know then, my Pericles, the mock encounter
 I turned, as taught by thee, to real rage.
 But blasted be the cowards which I led!
 They trembled at a boy.

Peri. Ha!

Per. Mark me well:
 The villains fled; but soon my prudence turn'd
 To good account that momentary shame.
 Thus—I pretend 'twas voluntary flight
 To save a brother's blood; accusing him
 As author of that conflict I declin'd,
 And he pursu'd with ardour and success.

Peri. That's artful. What ensued?

Per. The banquet follow'd,
 Held by the victor, as our rights require:
 To which his easy nature, soon appeas'd,
 Invited me. I went not; but sent spies
 To learn what pass'd; which spies, by chance detected,
 (Observe me) were ill us'd.

Peri. By whom? your brother?

Per. No; by his sons of riot. He soon after,
 Not knowing that my servants were abus'd,
 Kind, and gay-hearted, came to visit me.
 They, who misus'd my spies, for self-defence,
 Conceal'd their arms beneath the robes of peace.
 Of this inform'd, again my genius serv'd me.—

Peri. You took occasion, from these few in arms,
To charge a murderous assault on all.

Per. True, Pericles; but mark my whole address:
Against my brother swift I bar my gates;
Fly to my father; and with artful tears
Accuse Demetrius; first, of turning sports,
And guiltless exercise, to mortal rage;
Then of inviting me (still blacker guilt!)
To smiling death in an invenom'd bowl;
And last, that both these failing, mad with rage,
He threw his schemes of baffled art aside,
And with arm'd men avow'dly fought my life.

Peri. Three startling articles, and well concerted,
Following each other in an easy train.
With fair similitude of truth! But, Sir,
How bore your father?

Per. Oh! he shook! he fell!
Nor was his fleeting soul recall'd with ease.

Peri. What said he when recovered?

Per. His resolve
I know not yet; but see, his minion comes;
And comes perhaps to tell me. But I'll go;
Sustain my part, and echo loud my wrongs.
Nought so like innocence as perfect guilt.
If he brings aught of moment, you'll inform me.

[As Perseus goes off, he is seized by Officers.

Enter Dymas.

Peri. Even as the King?

Dym. Even as an aged oak
Push'd to and fro, the labour of the storm;
Whose largest branches are struck off by thunder;
Yet still he lives, and on the mountain groans;
Strong in affliction, awful from his wounds,
And more rever'd in ruin than in glory.

Peri. I hear Prince Perseus has accus'd his brother.

Dym. True: and the King's commands are now gone
forth

To throw them both in chains; for farther thought
Makes Philip doubt the truth of Perseus' charge.

Peri. What then is his design?

Dym. They both this hour
Must plead their cause before him. Nay, already
His nobles, judges, counsellors, are met;

And

And public justice wears her sternest form :
 A more momentous trial ne'er was known ;
 Whether the pleaders you survey as brothers,
 Or princes known in arts, or fam'd for arms ;
 Whether you ponder in their awful judge,
 The tender parent, or the mighty King.
 Greece, Athens hears the cause : the great result
 Is life, or death ; is infamy, or fame. [Trumpet.

Peri. What trumpets these ?

Dym. They summon to the court. [Exeunt.

SCENE *draws, and discovers the Court, King, &c.*

Enter Dymas, and takes his place by the King.

King. Bring forth the prisoners.

Strange trial this ! Here sit I to debate,
 Which vital limb to lop, nor that to save,
 But render wretched life more wretched still.
 What see I, but Heaven's vengeance, in my sons ?
 Their guilt a scourge for mine : 'tis thus Heaven writes
 Its awful meaning, plain in human deeds,
 And language leaves to man.

*Enter Perseus and Demetrius in chains, from different sides
 of the stage ; Perseus followed by Pericles, and Deme-
 trius by Antigonus.*

Dym. Dread Sir, your sons.

King. I have no sons ; and that I ever had,
 Is now my heaviest curse : and yet what care,
 What pains, I took to curb their rising rage !
 How often have I ranged through History,
 To find examples for their private use !
 The Theban brothers did I set before them——
 What blood ! what desolation ! but in vain !
 For thee, Demetrius, did I go to Rome,
 And bring thee patterns thence of brother's love :
 The Quintii, and the Scipios : but in vain !
 If I'm a monarch, where is your obedience ?
 If I'm your father, where's your duty to me ?
 If old, your veneration due to years ?
 But I have wept, and you have sworn, in vain !
 I had your ear, and enmity your heart.
 How was this morning's counsel thrown away !
 How happy is your mother in the grave !

She, when she bore you, suffered less: her pangs,
Her pungent pangs, throb thro' the father's heart.

Dem. You can't condemn me, Sir, to worse than this.

King. Than what, thou young deceiver? While I live
You both with impious wishes grasp my sceptre:
Nothing is sacred, nothing dear, but empire.
Brother, nor father, can you bear; fierce lust
Of empire burns, extinguish'd all beside.
Why pant you for it? to give others awe?
Be therefore aw'd yourselves, and tremble at it,
While in a father's hand.

Dym. My Lord, your warmth
Defers the business.

King. Am I then too warm?
They that should shelter me from every blast,
To be themselves the storm! O! how Rome triumphs!
Oh! how they bring this hoary head to shame!
Conquest and fame, the labour of my life,
Now turn against me, and call in the world
To gaze at what was Philip, but who now
Wants even the wretch's privilege—a wish.
What can I wish? Demetrius may be guiltless.
What then is Perseus? Judgment hangs as yet
Doubtful o'er them; but I'm condemn'd already;
For both are mine, and one—is foul as hell.
Should these two hands wage war; (these hands less dear!)
What boots it which prevails? In both I bleed.
But I have done. Speak, Perseus, and at large;
You'll have no second hearing. Thou forbear.

[To Demet.]

Per. Speak!—'Twas with utmost struggle I forbore:
These chains were scarce design'd to reach my tongue.
Their trespass is sufficient, stopping here.

[Shewing his arms.]

These chains! for what? Are chains for innocence?
Not so; for see, Demetrius wears them too.
Fool that I was to tremble at vain laws;
Nor learn from him defiance of their frown;
Since innocence and guilt are us'd alike;
Blood-thirsty stabbers, and their destin'd prey:
Perseus, and he—I will not call him brother:

[Pointing to Demet.]

He wants not that enhancement of his guilt.

King.

King. But closer to the point ; and lay before us
Your whole deportment this ill-fated day.

Per. Scarce was he cool from that embrace this morning,
Which you enjoin'd, and I sincerely gave ;
Nor thought he plann'd my death within my arms ;
When holding vile, oaths, honour, duty, love,
He fir'd our friendly sports to martial rage.
If war, why not fair war ? But that has danger.
From hostile conflict, as from brothers play,
He blush'd not to invite me to his banquet.
I went not ; and in that was I to blame ?
Think you there nothing had been found but peace,
From whence soon after sally'd armed men ?
'Think you I nothing had to fear from swords,
When from their foils I scarce escap'd with life ?
Or poison might his valour suit as well :——
This pass'd, as suits his wisdom, Macedonians,
Who volts o'er elder brothers to a throne :
With an arm'd rout he came to visit me.
Did I refuse to go, a bidden guest ?
And should I welcome him, a threat'ning foe !
Resenting my refusal ! boiling for revenge ?

Dem. 'Tis false.

Ant. Forbear——The King.

' *Per.* Had I receiv'd them,
' You now had mourn'd my death, nor heard my cause,
' Dares he deny he brought an armed throng ?
' Call those I name ; who dare this deed, dare all ;
' Yet will not dare deny, that this is true.
' My death alone can yield a stronger proof ?
' Will no less proof than that content a father ?
' *Peri.* Perseus, you see, has art, as well as fire ;
' Nor have the wars worn Athens from his tongue.'

Per. Let him who seeks to bathe in brother's blood,
Not find well pleas'd the fountain whence it flow'd :
Let him, who shudders at a brother's knife,
Find refuge in the bosom of a father :
For where else can I fly ? Whom else implore ?
I have no Romans, with their eagle's wings,
To shelter me ; Demetrius borrows those,
To mount full rebel-high : I have their hatred ;
And, thanks to Heaven ! deserve it : Good Demetrius

Can see your towns and kingdoms torn away
By these protectors, and ne'er lose his temper.
My weakness, I confess, it makes me rave;
It makes me weep—and my tears rarely flow:

Peri. Was ever stronger proof of filial love?

Per. Vain are Rome's hopes while you and I survive:
But should the sword take me, and age my father,
(Heav'n grant they leave him to the stroke of age)
The kingdom, and the King, are both their own;
A duteous loyal King, a scepter'd slave,
A willing Macedonian slave to Rome.

King. First let an earthquake swallow Macedonia.

Per. How, at such news, would Hannibal rejoice!
How the great shade of Alexander smile!
The thought quite choaks me up; I can no more.

King. Proceed.

Per. No, Sir,—Why have I spoke at all?
'Twas needless: Philip justifies my charge;
Philip's the single witness which I call,
To prove Demetrius guilty.

King. What dost thou mean?

Per. What mean I, Sir! what mean I!—To run mad!
For who, unshaken both in heart and brain,
Can recollect it?

King. What?

Per. This morning's insult.
'This morning they proclaim'd him Philip's King.
This morning they forgave you for his sake.
O, pardon, pardon! I could strike him dead.

King. More temper.

Per. Not more truth; that cannot be!
And that it cannot, one proof can't escape you?
For what but truth could make me, Sir, so bold?
Rome puts forth all her strength to crown her minion;
Demetrius' vices, thriving of themselves,
Her fulsome flatt'ries dung to ranker growth.
Demetrius is the burden of her song;
Each river, hill, and dale, has learnt his name;
While elder Perseus in a whisper dies.
Demetrius treats; Demetrius gives us peace;
Demetrius is our god, and would be so.
My sight is short: look at him you that can;

What sage experience fits upon his brow ?
 What awful marks of wisdom ? who vouchsafes
 To patronize a father, and a King !
 Such patronage is treason.

King. Treason ! Death !

Per. Nor let the ties of blood tie up the hands
 Of justice ; nature's ties are broke already :
 For, who contend before you ?——Your two sons ?——
 No ; read aright, 'tis Macedon and Rome.
 A well-mask'd foreigner, and your——only son,
 Guard of your life, and——exile of your love.
 Now, bear me to my dungeon : What so fit
 As darkness, chains, and death, for such a traitor ?

King. Speak, Demetrius.

Ant. My Lord, he cannot speak ; accept his tears——
 Instead of words.

Per. His tears as false, as they——
 Now, with fine praise, and foppery of tongue,
 More graceful action, and a smoother tone,
 That orator of fable, and fair face,
 Will steal on your brib'd hearts, and, as you listen,
 Plain truth, and I, plain Perseus, are forgot.

Dem. My father ! King ! and judge ; thrice awful
 power !

Your son, your subject, and your prisoner, hear ;
 Thrice humble state ! If I have grace of speech,
 (Which gives, it seems, offence) be that no crime,
 Which oft has serv'd my country and my King ;
 Nor in my brother let it pass for virtue,
 That, as he is, ungracious he would seem :
 For, Oh ! he wants not art, tho' grace may fail him.
 The wonted aids of those that are accus'd,
 Has my accuser seiz'd. He shed false tears,
 That my true sorrows might suspected flow :
 He seeks my life, and calls me murderer ;
 And vows no refuge can he find on earth,
 That I may want it in a father's arms ;
 Those arms, to which e'en strangers fly for safety.

King. Speak to your charge.

Dem. He charges me with treason.
 If I'm a traitor, if I league with Rome,
 Why did his zeal forbear me till this hour ?
 Was treason then no crime, till (as he feigns)

I fought

I fought his life ? Dares Perseus hold so much
 His father's welfare cheaper than his own ?
 Less cause have I, a brother, to complain.
 He says, I wade for empire thro' his blood :
 He says, I place my confidence in Rome :
 Why murder him, if Rome will crown my brow ?
 Will then a sceptre, dipp'd in brother's blood,
 Conciliate love, and make my reign secure ?
 False are both charges ; and he proves them false.
 By placing them together.

Ant. That's well urg'd.

Dem. Mark, Sir, how Perseus, unawares, absolves me
 From guilt in all, by loading all with guilt.
 Did I design him poison at my feast ?
 Why then did I provoke him in the field ?
 That, as he did, he might refuse to come ?
 When angry he refus'd, I should have sooth'd
 His rous'd resentment, and defend'd the blow ;
 Not destin'd him that moment to my sword,
 Which I before instructed him to shun.
 Thro' fear of death, did he decline my banquet ?
 Could I expect admittance then at his ?
 These numerous pleas at variance, overthrow
 Each other, and are advocates for me.

Per. No, Sir, Posthumus is his advocate.

King. Art thou afraid that I should hear him out ?

Dem. Quit then this picture, this well-painted fear,
 ' And come to that which touches him indeed.
 ' Why is Demetrius not despis'd of all,
 ' His second in endowments, as in birth ?
 ' How dare I draw the thoughts of Macedon ?
 ' How dare I gain esteem with foreign powers ?
 ' Esteem, when gain'd, how dare I to preserve ?
 ' These are his secret thoughts ; these burn within ;
 ' These sting up accusations in his soul ;
 ' Turn friendly visits to foul fraud, and murder ;
 ' And pour in poison to the bowl of love.
 ' Merit is treason in a younger brother.

King. But clear your conduct with regard to Rome.

Dem. Alas ! dread Sir, I grieve to find set down,
 ' Among my crimes, what ought to be my praise.
 ' That I went hostage, or ambassador,

' Was

' Was Philip's high command, not my request :
 ' Indeed, when there, in both those characters,
 ' I bore in mind to whom I owe my birth :
 ' Rome's favour follow'd. If it is a crime
 ' To be regarded, spare a crime you caus'd ;
 ' Caus'd by your orders, and example too.
 ' True, I'm Rome's friend, while Rome is your ally ;
 ' When not, this hostage, this ambassador,
 ' So dear, stands forth the fiercest of her foes ;
 ' At your commands, fly swift on wings of fire,
 ' The native thunder of a father's arm.

Ant. There spoke at once the hero and the son.'

Dem. To close—To thee, I grant some thanks are due ;
 [Speaking to Perseus.

Not for thy kindness, but malignity :
 Thy character's my friend, tho' thou my foe.
 For, say whose temper promises most guilt :
 Perseus, importunate, demands my death :
 I do not ask for his : Ah ! no ! I feel
 Too pow'rful Nature pleading for him here :
 But, were there no fraternal tie to bind me,
 A son of Philip must be dear to me.
 If you, my father, had been angry with me,
 An elder brother, a less awful parent,
 He should assuage you, he should intercede,
 Soften my failings, and indulge my youth :
 But my asylum drops its character ;
 I find not there my rescue, but my ruin.

Per. His bold assurance——

King. Do not interrupt him ;
 But let thy brother finish his defence.

Dem. O Perseus ! how I tremble as I speak !
 Where is a brother's voice, a brother's eye ?
 Where is the melting of a brother's heart ?
 Where is our awful father's dread command ?
 Where a dear dying mother's last request ?
 Forgot, scorn'd, hated, trodden under foot !
 Thy heart, how dead to ev'ry call of nature !
 Unson'd ! unbrother'd ! nay, unhumaniz'd !
 Far from affection, as thou'rt near in blood !
 Oh ! Perseus ! Perseus !—But my heart's too full.

[Falls on Antigonus.
King.

King. Support him.

Per. Vengeance overtakes his crimes.

King. No more !

Ant. See, from his hoary brow he wipes the dew,
Which agony wrings from him.

King. Oh, my friend,
These boys at strife, like *Ætna's* struggling flames,
Convulsions cause, and make a mountain shake ;
Shake Philip's firmness, and convulse his heart ;
And, with a fiery flood of civil war,
Threaten to deluge my divided land.
I've heard them both ; by neither am convinc'd ;
And yet *Demetrius'* words went thro' my heart ;
A double crime, *Demetrius*, is your charge ;
Fondness for Rome, and hatred to your brother.
If you can clear your innocence in one,
'Twill give us cause to think you wrong'd in both.

Dem. How shall I clear it, Sir ?

King. This honest man
Detests the Romans : If you wed his daughter,
Rome's foe becomes the guardian of your faith.

Dem. I told you, Sir, when I return'd from Rome—

King. How ! Dost thou want an absolute command ;
Your brother, father, country, all exact it.

Ant. See yonder guards at hand, if you refuse.

[*Aside to Demetrius*]

Nay, more ; a father, so distress'd, demands
A son's compassion, to becalm his heart.
Oh ! Sir, comply.

Dem. There ! there ! indeed you touch me !
Besides, if I'm confin'd, and *Perseus* free,
I never, never shall behold her more.—

Pardon, ye gods ! an artifice forc'd on me.

[*Aside*]

Dread Sir, your son complies.

Dym. Astonishment !

King. Strike off his chains. Nay, *Perseus* too is free ;
They wear no bonds, but those of duty, now.
Dymas, go thank the prince : he weds your daughter ;
And highest honours pay your high desert.

[*Exit*]

Dym. O, Sir, without presumption, may I dare
To lift my ravish'd thought ?——

Demetrius

Dem. In what I've done,
I paid a duty to my father's will :
And set you an example, where 'tis due,
Of not with holding yours.

Dym. My duty, Sir,
To you, can never fail.

Dem. Then, Dymas, I request thee,
Go seek the King, and save me from a marriage
My brother has contriv'd, in artful malice,
To make me lose my father, or my love.
Go, charge the just refusal on thyself.

Dym. What Philip authorizes me to wish,
You, Sir, may disappoint. But, to take on me
The load of the refusal——

Dem. Is no more
Than Dymas owes his honour, if he shun
The natural surmise, that he concurr'd
In brewing this foul treason.

Dym. Sir, the King
Knows what he does : and, if he seeks my glory——

Dem. In a degree, destructive of his own ;
'Tis yours to disappoint him, or renounce
Your duty to your King.

Dym. You'll better tell——

Dem. Yes, better tell the King, he wounds his honour,

By lifting up a minion from the dust,
And mating him with princes. Use your power
Against yourself. Yes, use it like a man,
In serving him who gave it. Thus you'll make
Indulgence, justice ; and absolve your master.
Tho' Kings delight in raising what they love,
Less owe they to themselves, than to the throne ;
Nor must they prostitute its Majesty,
To swell a subject's pride, howe'er deserving.

Dym. What the King grants me——

Dem. Talk not of a grant :
What a King ought not, that he cannot give ;
And what is more than meet from princes' bounty,
Is plunder, not a grant. Think you, his honour
A perquisite belonging to your place,
As favourite paramount ? Preserve the King

From

From doing wrong, tho' wrong is done for you ;
And shew, 'tis not in favour to corrupt thee.

Dym. I fought not, Sir, this honour.

Dem. But would take it.

True majesty's the very soul of Kings ;
And rectitude's the soul of majesty :
If mining minions sap that rectitude,
The King may live, but majesty expires :
And he that lessens Majesty, impairs
That just obedience public good requires ;
Doubly a traitor, to the crown and state.

Dym. Must I refuse what Philip's pleas'd to give ?

Dem. Can a King give thee more than is his own ?
Know, a King's dignity is public wealth ;
On that subsists the nation's fame and power.
Shall fawning sycophants, to plump themselves,
Eat up their master, and dethrone his glory ?
What are such wretches ? What, but vapours foul,
From fens and bogs, by royal beams exhal'd,
That radiance intercepting, which should cheer
Theland at large ? Hence subjects' hearts grow cold,
And frozen loyalty forgets to flow :
But, then 'tis slippery standing for the minion :
Stains on his ermin, to their royal master
Such miscreants are ; not jewels in his crown.
If you persist, Sir—But, of words no more !
To me, to threat, is harder than to do !

Dym. Let me embrace this genuine son of empire,
When warm debates divide the doubtful land,
Should I not know the prince most fit to reign ?
I've try'd you as an eagle tries her young,
And find, your dauntless eye is fix'd on glory.
I'll to the King, and your commands obey.—
We must give young men opiates in a fever.
Yes, boy, I will obey thee, to thy ruin.
Erixene shall strike thee dead for this.

[*Exit. Dym.*]

Dem. These statesmen nothing woo but gold and power,
I'm a bold advocate for other love ;
Tho' at their bar, indicted for a fool.
When reason, like the skilful charioteer,
Can break the fiery passions to the bit,
And, spite of their licentious sallies, keep

The radiant track of glory ; passions, then,
 Are aids and ornaments. Triumphant reason,
 Firm in her seat, and swift in her career,
 Enjoys their violence, and, smiling, thanks
 Their formidable flame, for high renown.
 Take then my soul, fair maid ! 'tis wholly thine ;
 And thence I feel an energy divine.
 When objects worthy praise our hearts approve,
 Each virtue grows on consecrated love :
 And sure soft passion claims to be forgiv'n,
 When love of beauty is the love of heav'n.

[Exit.

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

Enter Erixene and Delia.

ERIXENE.

'TIS plain ! 'tis plain ! this marriage gains her father :
 He join'd to Rome, the crown. Thy words were
 He wooes the diadem, that diadem which I [true ;
 Despis'd for him. Oh, how unlike our loves !
 But it is well ; he gives me my revenge.
 Wed Dymas' daughter ! What a fall is there !
 Not the world's empire could repair his glory.

Del. Madam, you can't be mov'd too much ! But why
 More now than at the first ?

Erix. At first I doubted :
 For who, that lov'd like me, could have believ'd ?
 I disbeliev'd what Pericles reported ;
 And thought it Perseus' art to wound our loves.
 But when the good Antigonus, sworn friend
 To false Demetrius, when his word confirm'd it,
 Then passion took me, as the northern blast
 An autumn leaf. O gods ! the dreadful whirl !
 But, while I speak, he's with her : laughs and plays ;
 Mingles his dalliance with insulting mirth ;
 To this new goddess offers up my tears ;
 Yes, with my shame and torture, wooes her love.

D

I see

I see, hear, feel it! O these raging fires!

Can then the thing we scorn give so much pain?

Del. Madam, these transports give him cause to triumph!

Erix. I vent my grief to thee; he ne'er shall know it.
If I can't conquer, I'll conceal my passion,
And stifle all its pangs beneath disdain.

Del. The greatest minds are most relenting too:
If then Demetrius should repent his crime —

Erix. If still my passion burns, it shall burn inward:
On the fierce rack in silence I'll expire,
Before one sigh escape me.—He repent!
What wild extravagance of thought is thine?
But did he? Who repents, has once been false:
In love, repentance but declares our guilt;
And injur'd honour shall exact its due.
In vain his love; nay, mine should groan in vain:
Both are devoted. Vengeance, vengeance reigns!
Our first love murder'd, is the sharpest pang
A human heart can feel.

Del. The King approaches.

Enter the King, &c.

King. Madam, at length we see the dawn of peace,
And hope an end of our domestic jars.
The jealous Perseus can no longer fear
Demetrius is a Roman, since this day
Makes him the son of Dymas, Rome's worst foe.

Erix. Already, Sir, I've heard, and heard with joy,
Th' important news.

King. To make our bliss run o'er:
You, Madam, will complete what Heav'n begins;
And save the love-sick Perseus from despair.
That marriage would leave Rome without pretence
To touch our conquest; and for ever join
To these dominions long disputed Thrace.

Enter Dymas.

Erix. Tho' Thrace by conquest slops to Macedon,
I know my rank, and would preserve its due.
With mediated coldness have I heard
Prince Perseus' vows; unwilling to consent
Before restor'd to my forefather's throne,
Lest that consent should merit little thanks,
As flowing less from choice than your command:

But since the Roman pride will find account
In my persisting still, and Philip suffer,
I quit the lofty thought on which I stood,
And yield to your request.

King. Indulgent gods !

Blest moment ! How will this with transport fill
The doubtful Perseus, after years of pain ?

Dym. My Lord, I've heard what pass, and give you joy
Of Perseus' nuptials, which your state requires :
But for Demetrius'—think of those no more.
Far from accepting such a load of glory,
I bring, I bring, my Lord, this forfeit head,
Due to my bold refusal.

King. Dares the boy
Fall from his promise, and impose on thee
Forc'd disobedience to my royal pleasure ?

Dym. No, my most honour'd Lord, there, there's my
Fond of the maid, with ardour he prest on ; [crime ;
But should I dare pollute his blood with mine ?
But you, Sir, authorize it—still more base,
To wrong a master so profusely kind.

King. The man is noble on whom Philip smiles ;
Come, come, there's something more in this—explain.

Dym. Why am I forc'd on this ungrateful office ?
Yet can't I tell you more than fame has told ;
Which says, Demetrius is in league with Rome.
Why weds ambition then an humble maid,
But to gain me to treason ? What then follows ?
'They'll say, the subtle statesman plann'd this marriage,
To raise his blood into his master's throne.
No, Sir, preserve my fame, let life suffice.

Enter Pericles.

Per. Sir, your ambassadors arriv'd from Rome ——

[Presents a letter.

King. Ha ! I must read it ; this will tell me more.

[After reading it.

Oh, Princess ! Now our only comfort flows
From your indulgence to my better son.
This dreadful news precipitates my wish.
To keep rapacious Rome from seizing Thrace,
You cannot wed too soon : my fair ally !
What if you bless me and my son to-morrow ?

Erix. Since your request, and your affairs demand it,
Without a blush, I think I may comply.

King. Oh, daughter!—but no more; the gods will
I go to bless my Perseus with the news. [thank you.

Dym. Thus the boy's dead in empire and in love.

[*Exeunt King, Dymas, &c.*

Erix. I triumph! I'm reveng'd! I reign! I reign!
Nor thank Demetrius' treason for a crown.
Love is our own cause, honour is the gods.
I can be glorious without happiness;
But without glory never can be blest.

Dcl. 'Tis well: but can you wed the man you scorn?

Erix. Wed any thing, for vengeance on the perjur'd.
I'll now insult him from an higher sphere:
This unexpected turn may gall his pride.

Whate'er has pangs for him, has charms for me.

Dcl. A rooted love is scarce so soon remov'd.

Erix. If not, the greater virtue to controul it:
And strike at his heart, tho' 'tis through my own.

Dcl. I can't but praise this triumph; yet I dread
The combat still. And see, the foe draws near.

Enter Demetrius.

Dem. Erixene!

Erix. My Lord!

Dem. My pale cheek speaks;
My trembling limbs prevent my faltering tongue,
And ask you——

Erix. What, my Lord?

Dem. My Lord!—Her eyes
Confirm it true, and yet, without a crime,
I can't believe it. Oh, Erixene——

Erix. I guess your meaning, Sir; but am surpriz'd
That Dymas' son should think of ought as I do.

Dem. False are my senses! false both ear and eye!
All, all be rather false than her I love!

Erix. She past not, Sir, this way.

Dem. Is then my pain
Your sport? And can Erixene pretend
Herself deceiv'd, by what deceiv'd the King?
An artifice made use of for your sake;
A proof, not violation of my love.

Erix. I thought not of your love, nor artifice:

Both

Both were forgot ; or, rather, never known.
 But without artifice I tell you this ;
 Your brother lays his sceptre at my feet,
 And whose example bids my heart resist
 The charms of empire ?

Dem. This is woman's skill :
 You cease to love, and from my conduct strive
 To labour an excuse. For if, indeed,
 You thought me false, had you been thus serene,
 Calm, and unruffled ? No ; my heart says, no.
 Passions, if great, tho' turn'd to their reverse,
 Keep their degree, and are great passions still.
 And she who, when she thinks her lover false,
 Retains her temper, never lost her heart.

Erix. That I'm serene, says not I never lov'd :
 Indeed, the vulgar float as passion drives ;
 But noble minds have reason for their queen.
 While you deserv'd, my passion was sincere :
 You change, my passion dies. But, pardon, Sir,
 If my vain mind thinks anger is too much ;
 Take my neglect, I can afford no more.

Dem. No ; Rage ! Flame ! Thunder ! give a thousand
 deaths !

Oh, rescue me from this more dreadful calm !
 This curs'd indifference ! which, like a frost
 In northern seas, out-does the fiercest storm.
 Commanded by my father to comply,
 I feign'd obedience : had I then refus'd —

Erix. I grant the consequence had been most dreadful !
 I grant that Dymas' daughter had been angry.

Dem. Ask Dymas, with what rage —

Erix. You well might rage
 To be refus'd.

Dem. Refus'd !

Erix. He told your secret ;
 The King, and I, and all the court can witness.

Dem. Refus'd ! false villain ! Oh, the perjur'd slave !
 Hell-born impostor ! Madam, 'tis most false !
 Warm from my heart in ev'ry word I speak ;
 The villain lies ! Believe the pangs that rend me :
 Believe the witness streaming from my eyes,
 And let me speak no more.

Erix. I do believe
Your grief sincere. I've heard the maid is fair.

Dem. Proceed ; and thus, indeed, commit that crime
You falsely charge on me. The crown has charm'd you.
How warm this morning did you press my flight !
The cause is plain : an out-rag'd lover's groan,
And dying agony molest our ear,
And hurt the musick of our nuptial song.

Erix. Since your inconstancy persists to charge
Its crime on my ambition, I'll be kind,
And leave you in possession of an error
Of which you seem so fond.

Dem. Ah ! stay one moment !

Enter Perseus and Pericles.

Per. Erixene !

Dem. Distraction !

[*Starting.*

Erix. 'Tis well tim'd.

My Lord, your brother doubts if I'm sincere,
And thinks (an error natural to him)
I'll break my vow to you. You'll clear my fame,
And labour to convince him, that to-morrow,
Erixene's at once a bride and queen.

[*Exit.*

Per. When I have work'd him up to violence,
Bring thou the King, and pity my distress.

[*To Per. who goes out.*

Dem. On what extremes extreme distress compels
In things impossible I put my trust : [me !
I in my only brother find a foe ;
Yet in my rival, hope the greatest friend.
When all our hopes are lodg'd in such expedients,
'Tis as if poison were our only food,
And death was call'd on as the guard of life.'

Per. Why dost thou droop ?

Dem. Because I'm dead ; quite dead
To hope ; and yet rebellious to despair ;
Like ghosts unblest'd, that burst the bars of death.
Strange is my conduct ?—Stranger my distress :
Beyond example both ! Who e'er before me
Press'd his worst foe, to prove his truest friend ?
But tho' thou'rt not my brother, thou'rt a man ;
And, if a man, compassionate the worst
That man can feel ; tho' found that worst in me.

Per.

Per. What wouldst?

Dem. Unclinch thy talons from thy prey;
Let the dove fly to this her nest again. [*Striking his breast.*
For, Oh! the maid's unalienably mine,
Tho' now thro' rage run mad, and turn'd to thee.
How often have I languish'd at her feet?
Bask'd in her eye, and revell'd in her smile?
How often, as she listen'd to my vows,
Trembling and pale with agonies of joy,
Have I left earth, and mounted to the stars?

Per. There Dymas' daughter shone above the rest,
Illustrious in thy sight.

Dem. Thy taunt, how false!—
I no less press your int'rest than my own.
Think you 'tis possible her heart so long
Inclin'd to me, the price of all my vows,
Purchas'd by tears and groans, and paid me down
In tenderest returns of love divine,
Can in one day be yours?—Impossible!

Per. If I'm deceiv'd, I'm pleas'd with the deceit.
How my heart dances in the golden dream!
In pity do not wake me 'till to-morrow.

Dem. Then thou'lt awake distracted. Trust me, bro—
' She gives her hand alone. [ther,

' *Per.* Nor need I more;
' That hand's enough that brings a sceptre in it.
' I scorn the prince who weds with meaner views.
' Her duty's mine, and I conceive small pain
' From your sweet error, that her love is yours.
' I'm pleas'd such cordial thoughts of your own merit
' Support you in distress.'

Dem. Inhuman Perseus!
If pity dwells within the heart of man,
If due that pity to the last distress,
Pity a lover exquisitely pain'd,
A lover exquisitely pain'd by you.
Oh! in the name of all the gods, relent!
Give me my princess, give her to my throes!
Amidst a thousand you may chuse a love;
The spacious earth contains but one for me.—
But Oh! I rave. Art thou not he, the man
Who drinks my groans like music at his ear?

And

And would as wine, as nectar drink my blood ?
 Are all my hopes of mercy lodg'd in thee ?
 Oh, rigid gods ! and shall I then fall down,
 Embrace thy feet, and bathe them with my tears ?
 Yes, I will drown thee with my tears, my blood,
 So thou afford a human ear to pangs,
 A brother's pangs, a brother's broken heart.

Per. Pardon, Demetrius ; but the Princess calls,
 And I am bound to go.

Dem. Oh, stay ! *[Laying hold of him.]*

Per. You tremble.

Dem. The Princess calls, and you are bound to go !

Per. E'en so.

Dem. What princess ?

Per. Mine.

Dem. 'Tis false.

Per. Unhand me.

Dem. What, see, talk, touch, nay taste her like a bee,
 Draw honey from her wounded lip, while I
 Am stung to death !

Per. The triumph once was yours.

Dem. Rip up my breast, or you shall never stir.
 My heart may visit her ! Oh, take it with you !
 Have I not seen her, where she has not been ?
 Have I not clasp'd her shadow ? Trod her steps ;
 Transportèd trod ! as if they led to Heaven ?
 Each morn my life I lighted at her eye,
 And every evening, at its close expir'd.—

[Bursts into tears.]

Per. Fie ! thou'rt a Roman ; can a Roman weep ?
 Sure Alexander's helmet can sustain
 Far heavier strokes than these. For shame, Demetrius ;
 E'en snatch up the next Sabin in the way,
 'Twill do as well. *[Going.]*

Dem. By Heaven, you shall not stir.
 Long as I live, I stand a world between you,
 And keep you distant as the poles asunder.
 Who takes my love, in mercy takes my life ;
 Thy bloody pass cleave thro' thy brother's breast.
 I beg, I challenge, I provoke my death.

[His hand upon his sword.]

Enter

Enter King and Dymas.

Per. You will not murder me?

Dem. Yes, you and all.

King. How like a tyger foaming o'er his prey!

Per. Now, Sir, believe your eye, believe your ear,
And still believe me perjurd as this morning.

King. Heav'n's wrath's exhausted, there's no more to
My darling son found criminal in all. [fear.]

Dem. That villain there to blast me! Yes, I'll speak;
For what have I to fear, who feel the worst?
'Tis time the truth were known. That villain, Sir,
Has cleft my heart, and laughs to see it bleed:
But his confession shall redeem my fame,
And re-enthroned me in my Princess's smile;
Or I'll return that false embrace he gave me,
And stab him in your sight.

King. Hold, insolent!
Where's your respect to me?

Dem. Oh, royal Sir!
' That has undone me. Thro' respect I gave
' A feign'd consent, which this black artifice
' Has turn'd to my destruction. I refus'd
' That slave's, that cursed slave, that statesman's daugh-
' And he pretends she was refus'd to me. [ter,
' Hence, hence, this desolation. Nought I fear,
' Tho' nature groans her last. And shall he then
' Escape and triumph?

King. Guards there! Seize the Prince!
The man you menace you shall learn to fear.

Dym. Hold, Sir! not this for me! It is your son.
What is my life, tho' pour'd upon your feet?

King. Is this a son?

Dem. No, Sir; my crime's too great,
Which dares to vindicate a father's honour,
To catch the glories of a falling crown,
And save it from pollution. But I've done.
I die, unless my Princess is restor'd; [*Pointing to Dym.*
And if I die, by heav'n, and earth, and hell!
His fordid blood shall mingle with the dust,
And see if thence 'twill mount into the throne.
Oh, Sir! think of it! I'll expect my fate.

[*Exit.*

King. And thou shalt have it.

Dym.

Dym. How, my Lord, in tears !

King. As if the gods came down in evidence !
How many sudden rays of proof concur
To my conviction ? Was e'er equal boldness ?
But 'tis no wonder from a brother king ;

[*Produces the forg'd letter.*]

This king of Thrace—To-morrow he'll be king
Of Macedon——He therefore dies to-night.

Per. And yet I doubt it, for I know his fondness.
Thou practise well the lesson I have taught thee,
While I put on a solemn face of woe,
Afflicted for a brother's early fall—— [*Aside to Dym.*
Heaven knows with what regret—But, Sir, your safety—
[*Presenting the mandate for Demetrius's death.*]

King. What giv'it thou here ?

Dym. Your passport to renown.
You sign your apotheosis in that.
What scales the skies, but zeal for public good ?

Per. How god-like mercy !

Dym. Mercy to mankind,
By treason aw'd.

King. Must then thy brother bleed ? [*To Per.*
[*Dym. seeming at a loss, Per. whispers him,*
and gives a letter.]

Dym. No, Sir, the king of Thrace. [*Looks on the letter.*

King. Why that is true——
Yet who, if not a father, should forgive ?

Dym. Who, Sir, if not a Philip, should be just ?

King. Is't not my son ? [*To Dym.*

Dym. If not, far less his guilt.

King. Is't not my t'other Perseus ? [*To Per.*

Per. Sir, I thank you :
That seeks your crown and life.

King. And life ?

Dym. No, Sir ;
He'll only take your crown, you still may live.

King. Heav'n blast thee for that thought.

Per. Why shakes my father ?

King. It stabs, it gnaws, it harrows up my soul.
Is he not young ? Was he not much indulg'd ?
Gall'd by his brother ? Doubted by his father ?
Tempted by Rome ? A nation to a boy ?

Dym.

Dym. Oh, a mere infant! —that deposes kings.

King. No; once he sav'd my crown.

Dym. And now would wear it.

King. How my head swims!

Per. Nor strange; the task is hard.

Dym. Yet scarce for him. Brutus was but a Roman;

[Speaking as if he would not have the King hear.]

Yet like a Philip dar'd, and is immortal.

King. I hear thee, Dymas; give me then the mandate.

[Going to sign, he stops short.]

Dym. No wonder if his mother thus had paus'd.

Per. Rank cankers on thy tongue! Why mention her?

[Aside.]

King. Oh, gods! I see her now: what am I doing?

[Throws away the style.]

I see her dying eye let fall a tear

In favour of Demetrius. Shall I stab

Her lovely image stamp'd on ev'ry feature?

Dym. His soul escap'd it, Sir.

King. Thou ly'st; be gone.

[Per. and Dym. in great confusion, Per. whispers Dym.]

Dym. True, that or nought will touch him.

[Aside to Per.]

If, Sir, your mercy ———

[To the King.]

Per. O speak on of mercy!

Mercy, the darling attribute of Heav'n.

Dym. If you should spare him —

King. What if I should spare him?

Dym. I dare not say — Your wrath again might rise.

King. Yes, if thou'rt silent — What if I should spare him?

Dym. Why if you should, proud Rome would thank you for it.

King. Rome! — Her applause more shocks me than his

Oh, thou, Death's orator! Dread advocate *[death.]*

For bowellefs severity! assist

My trembling hand, as thou hast steel'd my heart;

And if it is guilt in me, share the guilt.

He's dead. *[Signs.]* And if I blot it with one tear,

Perseus, tho' less affected, will forgive me.

Per. Forgive! Sir, I applaud, and wish my sorrow
Was mild enough to weep.

*[The King going out meets Demetrius in mourning,
introduced by Antigonus.]*

[King]

[King starts back, and drops on Dym.
Recovering speaks.

King. This, Fate, is thy tenth wave, and quite o'erwhelms me.

It less had shock'd me, had I met his ghost.

This is a plot to sentence me to death.

What hast thou done, my mortal foe ! thrown bars

[To Ant.

Athwart my glory ? But thy scheme shall fail.

As rushing torrents sweep th' obstructing mound,

So Philip meets this mountain in his way,

Yet keeps his purpose still.

[Perseus and Pericles whisper aside.

Peri. I can't but fear it.

Per. I grant the danger great, yet don't despair.

Jove is against thee, Perseus on thy side.

Ant. The Prince, dread Sir, low on his bended knee---

King. This way, Antigonus. Dost mark his bloom ?

Grace in his aspect, grandeur in his mein ?

Ant. I do.

King. 'Tis false, take a King's word. He's dead.

That darling of my soul would stab me sleeping.

How dar'st thou start ? Art thou the traitor's father ?

If thou art pale, what is enough for me ?

How his grave yawns ! Oh, that it was my own !

Ant. Mourn not the guilty.

King. No, he's innocent ;

Death pays his debt to justice, and that done,

I grant him still my son, as such I love him ;

Yes, and will clasp him to my breast, while yet

His clay is warm, nor moulders at my touch.

Per. A curse on that embrace.

[Aside.

Dym. Nay, worse, he weeps.

King. Poor boy, be not deceiv'd by my compassion ;
My tears are cruel, and I groan thy death.

Dem. And am I then to die ? If death's decreed,
Stab me yourself, not give me to the knife
Of midnight ruffians, that have forg'd my crimes.

For you I beg, for you I pour my tears ;
You are deceiv'd, dishonour'd, I am only slain.

Oh, father !-----

King. ' Father ! there's no father here.'

For-

Forbear to wound me with that tender name :
Nor raise all nature up in arms against me.

Dem. My father ! guardian ! friend ! ‘ nay, deity !
‘ What less than gods give being, life and death !’
My dying mother—

‘ *King.* Hold thy peace, I charge thee.’

Dem. Pressing your hand, and bathing it with tears,
Bequeath’d your tenderness for her, to me ;
And low on earth my legacy I claim,
Clasping your knees, tho’ banish’d from your breast.

‘ *King.* My knees !—Would that were all, he grasps
my heart.

‘ Perseus, canst thou stand by and see me ruin’d ?

[*Reaching his hand to Perseus.*

‘ *Per.* Loose, loose thy hold. It is my father too.

‘ *King.* Yes, Macedon, and thine, and I’ll preserve thee.

‘ *Dem.* Who once before preserv’d it from the Thra-
‘ And who at Thracimene turn’d the lifted bolt [cian ?
‘ From Philip’s hoary brow ?’

King. I’ll hear no more.

O Perseus ! Dymas ! Pericles ! assist me,
Unbind me, disenchant me, break this charm
Of nature, that accomplice with my foes ;
Rend me, O rend me, from the friend of Rome.

‘ *Per.* Nay, then, howe’er reluctant, aid I must.

‘ The friend of Rome !—That severs you for ever,
‘ Tho’ most incorporate and strongly knit,
‘ As lightning rends the knotted oak asunder.

‘ *Dem.* In spite of lightning I renew the tie ;
‘ And stubborn is the grasp of dying men.
‘ Who’s he that shall divide me from myself ?

[*Demetrius is forced from the King’s knees, on which,
starting up, he flings his arms round his father.*

‘ Still of a piece with him from whom I grew,

‘ I’ll bleed on my asylum, dart my soul

‘ In this embrace, and thus my treason crown.’

King. Who love yourselves, or Macedon, or me,
From the curs’d eagle’s talons wrench my crown ;
And this barb’d arrow from my breast.—’Tis done ;

[*Forced asunder.*

And the blood gushes after it. I faint.

Dym. Support the King.

E

Per.

THE BROTHERS.

Per. While treason licks the dust.

[*Pointing to Demetrius fallen in the struggle.*]

Dym. A field well fought.

Per. And justice has prevail'd.

King. 'O, that the traitor could conceal the son!'

Farewel, once best lov'd! still most deplor'd!

He, he who dooms thee, bleeds upon thy tomb. [*Exit.*]

Dem. Prostrate on thee, my mother Earth, be thou
Kinder than brother, or than father; open
And save me in thy bosom from my—friends.

'Friends, sworn to wash their hands in guiltless tears,

'And quench infernal thirst in kindred blood.

'As if relation sever'd human hearts;

'Or that destruction was the child of love.

Per. Farewel, young traitor; if they ask below,

'Who sent thee beardless down, say, honest Perseus;

'Whom reason sways, not instinct; who can strike

'At horrid parricide, and flagrant treason,

'Tho' thro' a bosom dearer than his own.

'Think'st thou, my tender heart can hate a brother?

'The gods and Perseus war with nought but guilt.

'But I must go. What, Sir, your last commands

'To your Erixeue? She chides my stay. [*Exit.*]

Dem. 'Without that token of a brother's love

'He could not part; my death was not enough.

'I came for mercy, and I find it here.

'And death is mercy, since my love is lost.'

Alas! my father too; my heart aches for him.

And Perseus—fain wou'd I forgive e'en thee:

But Philip's sufferings cry too loud against it.

Blind author, and sure mourner of my death!

Father most dear! What pangs hast thou to come?

Like that poor wretch is thy unhappy doom,

Who while in sleep his fever'd fancy glows,

Draws his keen sword, and sheaths it in his foes:

But waking starts upright, in wild surprize,

To feel warm blood glide round him as he lies;

To see his reeking hands in crimson dy'd,

And a pale corse extended by his side.

He views with horror what mad dreams have done,

And sinks heart-broken on a murder'd son.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

King, Posthumius, &c. *meeting.*

POSTHUMIUS.

WE, in behalf of our allies, O King!
 Call'd on thee, yesterday, to clear thy glory.
 No wonder now that Philip is unjust
 To strangers, who has murder'd his own son.

King. 'Tis false.

Post. No thanks to Philip that he fled.

King. A traitor is no son.

Post. Heav'n's vengeance on me,
 If he refus'd not yesterday thy crown,
 Tho' life and love both brib'd him to comply.

King. See there.

[*Gives the letter.*]

Post. 'Tis not the consul's hand or seal,

King. You're his accomplices.

Post. We're his avengers.

'Tis war.

King. Eternal war.

Post. Next time we meet —

King. Is in the capitol. Haste, fly my kingdom.

Post. No longer thine.

King. Yes, and proud Rome a province.

[*Exeunt Posthumius, &c.*]

The brave, they make, they tyrannize o'er kings.
 The name of king the prostrate world ador'd,
 Ere Romulus had call'd his thieves together.—
 But let me pause—Not Quintius' hand or seal!—
 Doubt and impatience, like thick smoak and fire,
 Cloud and torment my reason.

Ant. Sir, recall,

And re-examine those you sent to Rome.
 You took their evidence in haste and anger.
 Torture, if they refuse, will tell the truth.

King. Go stop the nuptials till you hear from me.

[*Exeunt King and Ant.*]

Erixene and Delia meeting.

Del. Madam, the Prince who fled from threaten'd death,

Attempting his escape to foreign realms,
 Was lately taken at the city gates,
 So strongly guarded by his father's pow'rs ;
 And now confin'd expects his final doom.

Erix. Imprison'd and to die !—And let him die.
 Bid Dymas' daughter weep. I half forgot
 His perjur'd insolence ; I'll go and glut
 My vengeance. Oh, how just a traitor's death !
 And blacker still, a traitor to my love.

[*Exeunt Erixene and Delia.*]

Scene draws, and shews Demetrius in prison.

Dem. Thou subterranean sepulchre of peace !
 Thou home of horror ! hideous nest of crimes !
 Guilt's first sad stage in her dark road to hell !
 Ye thick-barr'd sunless passages for air,
 To keep alive the wretch that longs to die !
 Ye low brow'd arches, thro' whose fullen gloom,
 Resound the ceaseless groans of pale despair !
 Ye dreadful shambles, cak'd with human blood !
 Receive a guest, from far, far other scenes,
 From pompous courts, from shouting victories,
 Carousing festivals, harmonious bow'rs,
 And the soft chains of heart-dissolving love,
 Oh, how unlike to these ! Heart-breaking load
 Of shame eternal, ne'er to be knock'd off !
 Oh, welcome death ! No, never but by thee——
 Nor has a foe done this.—A friend ! a father !—
 Oh, that I could have dy'd without their guilt !—

Enter Erixene, Demetrius gazing at her.

So look'd in chaos the first beam of light.
 How drives the strong enchantment of her eye
 All horror hence !—How die the thoughts of death !

Erix. I knew not my own heart. I cannot bear it.
 Shame chides me back : for to insult his woes
 Is too severe ; and to condole, too kind. [Going.]

Dem. Thus I arrest you in the name of mercy,
 And dare compel your stay. Is then one look,
 One word, one moment, a last moment too ;
 When I stand tottering on the brink of death,
 A cruel ignominious death, too much

For one that loves like me ? A length of years
 You may devote to my blest rival's arms ;
 I ask but one short moment. O permit,
 Permit the dying to lay claim to thee,
 To thee, thou dear equivalent for life.
 Cruel, relentless, marble-hearted maid !

Erix. Demetrius, you persist to do me wrong ;
 For know, tho' I behold thee as thou art,
 Doubly a traitor to the state and me,
 Thy sorrow, thy distress have touch'd my bosom :
 I own it is a fault, I pity thee.

Enter Officer.

[you:

Offi. My Lord, your time is short, and death waits for

Erix. Death !—I forgive thee from my inmost soul.

Dem. Forgive me ? Oh ! thou need'st not to forgive,
 If imposition had not struck thee blind.

Truth lies in ambush yet, but will start up,
 And seize thy trembling soul, when mine is fled..
 O, I've a thousand, thousand things to say.

Erix. And I am come a secret to disclose,
 That might awake thee wert thou dead already.

Offi. My Lord, your final moment is expir'd.

Dem. and *Erix.* One, one short moment more..

Dem. No ; death lets fall
 The curtain, and divides our love for ever.

[*Dem. is forced out.*

Erix. Oh, I've a darker dungeon in my soul,
 Nor want an executioner to kill me.

‘ What revolutions in the human heart

‘ Will pity cause ! What horrid deeds revenge !’ [*Exit.*

Scene shuts.

Enter Antigonus with Attendants.

Ant. How distant virtue dwells from mortal man !
 Was't not that each man calls for other's virtue,
 Her very name on earth would be forgot,
 And leave the tongue, as it has left the heart.
 Was ever such a labour'd plan of guilt ?
 Take the King's mandate, to the prison fly,
 Throw wide the gates, and let Demetrius know
 The full detail.

Enter Erixene.

The Princess ! ha ! be gone.

[*To the Attendant.*

E 3

While

While I stir up an equal transport here.
 Princess, I see your griefs, and judge the cause :
 But I bring news might raise you from the grave ;
 Or call you down from Heaven to hear with joy.
 Just gods ! the virtuous will at last prevail.
 On motives here too tedious to relate,
 I begg'd the King to re-examine those
 Who came from Rome. The King approv'd my counsel.
 Surpriz'd, and conscious, in their charge they faulted,
 And threaten'd tortures soon discover'd all :
 That Perseus brib'd them to their perjuries ;
 That Quintius' letter was a forgery ;
 That prince Demetrius' intercourse with Rome
 Was innocent of treason to the state.

Erix. Oh, my swollen heart ! What will the gods do
 with me ?

Ant. And to confirm this most surprizing news,
 Dymas, who, striving to suppress the tumult,
 The rumour of Demetrius' flight had rais'd,
 Was wounded sore, with his last breath confess'd,
 The Prince refus'd his daughter, which affront
 Inflam'd the statesman to his Prince's ruin.

Erix. Did he refuse her ?

[Swoons.

Ant. Quite o'ercome with joy !
 Transported out of life !—The Gods restore her !

Erix. Ah ! why recall me ? This is a new kind
 Of murder ; most severe ! that dooms to life.

Ant. Fair Princess, you confound me.

Erix. Am I fair ?

Am I a princess ? Love and empire mine ?
 Gay, gorgeous visions dancing in my sight !——
 No, here I stand a naked shipwreck'd wretch,
 Cold, trembling, pale, spent, helpless, hopeless, mad,
 Cast on a shore as cruel as the waves.

O'er hung with rugged rocks, too steep to climb :
 The mountain billows loud, come foaming in
 Tremendous ; and confound, ere they devour.

Ant. Madam, the King absolves you from your vow.

Erix. For me, it matters not ; but Oh ! the Prince—
 When he had shot the gulph of his despair ;
 Emerging into all the light of Heav'n ;
 His heart high beating, with well-grounded hope ;
 Then

' Then to make shipwreck of his happiness,
 ' Like a poor wretch that has escap'd the storm,
 ' And swam to what he deems an happy isle,
 ' When lo ! the savage natives drink his blood.
 ' Ah ! why is vengeance sweet to woman's pride,
 ' As rapture to her love ? It has undone me.'

Del. Madam, he comes.

Erix. Leave us, Antigonus.

Ant. What dreadful secret this ?——But I'll obey,
 Invoke the gods, and leave the rest to fate. [Exit.

Erix. How terribly triumphant comes the wretch !
 He comes, like flowers ambrosial, early born,
 'To meet the blast, and perish in the storm.

Enter Demetrius.

Dem. After an age of absence in one hour,
 Have I then found thee, thou celestial maid !
 Like a fair Venus in a stormy sea ;
 Or a bright goddess, thro' the shades of night,
 Dropt from the stars, to these blest arms again ?
 How exquisite is pleasure after pain !
 Why throbs my heart so turbulently strong,
 Pain'd at thy presence, thro' redundant joy,
 Like a poor miser, beggar'd by his store ?

Erix. Demetrius, joy and sorrow dwell too near.

Dem. Talk not of sorrow, lest the gods resent,
 As under-priz'd, so loud a call to joy.
 I live, I love, am lov'd, I have her here !
 Rapture in present, and in prospect, more !
 No rival, no destroyer, no despair ;
 For jealousies, for partings, groans, and death,
 A train of joys, the gods alone can name !
 When Heav'n descends in blessings so profuse,
 So sudden, so surpassing hope's extreme,
 Like the sun bursting from the midnight gloom,
 'Tis impious to be niggards in delight ;
 Joy becomes duty ; Heav'n calls for some excess,
 And transport flames our incense to the skies.

Erix. Transport how dreadful !

Dem. Turns Erixene ?

Can she not bear the sun-shine of our fate ?
 Meridian happiness is pour'd around us ;
 And laughing loves descend in swarms upon us ;

And

And where we tread is an eternal spring.
By Heav'n, I almost pity guilty Perseus
For such a loss.

Erix. That stabs me thro' and thro' !

Dem. What stabs thee ?—Speak. Have I then lost thy
love ?

Erix. To my confusion be it spoke——'Tis thine.

Dem. To thy confusion ! Is it then a crime ?
You heard how dying Dymas clear'd my fame.

Erix. I heard, and trembled ; heard, and ran distracted.

Dem. Astonishment !

Erix. I've nothing else to give thee.

*[He retires in astonishment, she in agony, and both are
silent for some time.]*

He is struck dumb ; nor can I speak ;—yet must I.

I tremble on the brink ; yet must plunge in.

Know, my Demetrius, joys are for the gods ;

Man's common course of nature is distress :

His joys are prodigies ; and like them too,

Portend approaching ill. The wise man starts,
And trembles at the perils of a bliss.

To hope, how bold ? How daring to be fond,

When, what our fondness grasps, is not immortal ?—

I will presume on thy known, steady virtue,

And treat thee like a man ; I will, Demetrius ;

Nor longer in my bosom hide a brand,

That burns unseen, and drinks my vital blood.

Dem. What mystery ? *[Here a second pause in both.]*

Erix. The blackest.

Dem. How every terror doubles in the dark !

Why muffled up in silence stands my fate ?

This horrid spectre let me see at once,

And shew if I'm a man.

Erix. It calls for more.

Dem. It calls for me then ; love has made me more.

Erix. Oh, fortify thy soul with more than love ;
To hear, what heard, thou'lt curse the tongue that tells

Dem. Curse whom ? Curse thee ! *[thee.]*

Erix. Yes, from thy inmost soul.

Why dost thou lift thine eyes and hands to Heav'n ?

The pow'rs most conscious of this deed, reside

In darkness, howl below in raging fires,

Where

Where pangs like mine corrode them. Thence arise
 Black gods of execration and despair !
 Thro' dreadful earthquakes cleave your upward way,
 While nature shakes, and vapours blot the sun ;
 Then thro' those horrors in loud groans proclaim,
 That I am——

Dem. What ?—I'll have it, tho' it blast me.

Erix. Thus then in thunder—I am Perseus' wife.

[*Demetrius falls against the Scene. After a pause,*

Dem. In thunder ! No ; that had not struck so deep.
 What tempest e'er discharg'd so fierce a fire ?
 Calm and deliberate anguish feeds upon me.
 Each thought sent out for help brings in new woe.
 Where shall I turn ? Where fly ? To whom but thee ?

[*Kneeling,*

Tremendous Jove ! whom mortals will not know
 From blessings, but compel to be severe.
 I feel thy vengeance, and adore thy power.
 I see my failings, and absolve thy rage.
 But, Oh ! I must perceive the load that's on me ;
 I can't but tremble underneath the stroke.
 Aid me to bear !—But since it can't be borne,
 Oh, let thy mercy burst in flames upon me !
 Thy triple bolt is healing balm to this.
 This pain unfelt, unfancy'd by the wretch,
 The groaning wretch, that on the wheel expires.

Erix. Why did I tell thee ?

Dem. Why commit a deed
 Too shocking to be told ? What fumes of hell
 Flew to thy brain ? What fiend the crime inspir'd ?

Erix. Perseus, last night, as soon as thou wast fled,
 At that dead hour, when good men are at rest,
 When every crime and horror is abroad,
 Graves yawn, fiends yell, wolves howl, and ravens scream ;
 Than ravens, wolves, or fiends more fatal far ;
 To me he came, and threw him at my feet,
 And wept, and swore, unless I gave consent
 To call a priest that moment, all was ruin'd.
 That the next day Demetrius and his powers
 Might conquer, he lose me, and I my crown,
 Confer'd by Philip but on Perseus' wife.
 I started, trembled, fainted ; he invades

My

My half-recover'd strength, brib'd priests conspire,
 All urg'd my vow, all seiz'd my ravish'd hand,
 Invoke the gods, run o'er the hasty rite ;
 While each ill omen of the sky flew o'er us,
 And furies howl'd our nuptial song below. —
 Can'st thou forgive ?

Dem. By all the flames of love,
 And torments of despair, I never can.
 The furies toss their torches from thy hand,
 And all their adders hiss around thy head.
 I'll see thy face no more.

Erix. Thy rage is just.

Yet stay and hear me. *[She kneels and holds him.]*

Dem. I have heard too much. *[Sine !]*

Erix. 'Till thou hast heard the whole, O do not curse

Dem. Where can I find a curse to reach thy crime ?

Erix. Mercy ! *[Weeping.]*

Dem. *[Aside.]* Her tears, like drops of molten lead,
 With torment burn their passage to my heart.
 And yet such violation of her vows —

Erix. Mercy !

Dem. Perseus — *[Stamping.]*

Erix. Stamp 'till the centre shakes,
 So black a dæmon shalt thou never raise.
 Perseus ! Can'st thou abhor him more than I ?
 Hell has its furies, Perseus has his love,
 And, Oh ! Demetrius his eternal hate.

Dem. Eternal ! Yes, eternal and eternal ;
 As deep, and everlasting as my pain.

Erix. Some god descend and sooth his soul to peace !

Dem. Talk'st thou of peace ! what peace hast thou be-
 A brain distracted, and a broken heart. *[slow'd.]*
 Talk'st thou of peace ? Hark, hark, thy husband calls,
 His father's rebel ! Brother's murderer !
 Nature's abhorrence, and thy lawful lord !
 Fly, my kind patroness, and in his bosom
 Consult my peace.

Erix. I never shall be there.
 My lord ! my life !

Dem. How say'st ? Is Perseus here ? —
 Fly, fly ! away, away ; 'tis death ! 'tis incest !

[Starting wide, and looking round him.]

Dar'st

Dar'st thou to touch Demetrius? Dar'st thou touch him,
Even with thine eye?

[*As he is going, she lays hold of his robe.*]

Erix. I dare—and more, dare seize,
And fix him here: no doubt to thy surprize——
I'm blemish'd, not abandon'd; honour still
Is sacred in my sight. Thou call'st it incest;
'Tis innocence, 'tis virtue; if there's virtue
In fixt, inviolable strength of love.
For know, the moment the dark deed was done;
The moment madness made me Perseus' wife,
I seiz'd this friend, and lodg'd him in my bosom.

[*Shewing a dagger.*]

Firmly resolv'd I never would be more:
And now I fling me at thy feet, imploring
Thy steadier hand to guide him to my heart.
Who wed in vengeance, wed not but to die.

'*Dem.* Has Perseus then an hymeneal claim?
'And no divorce, but death?—and death from me,
'Who should defend thee from the world in arms?
'O thou still excellent! still most lov'd!

'*Erix.* Life is the foe that parts us; death a friend,
'All knots dissolving, joins us; and for ever.
'Why so disorder'd? Wherefore shakes thy frame?
'Look on me; do I tremble? Am I pale?
'When I let loose a sigh, I'll pardon thine.
'Take my example, and be bravely wretched:
'True grandeur rises from surmounted ills;
'The wretched only can be truly great.
'If not in kindness, yet in vengeance strike;
''Tis not Erixene, 'tis Perseus' wife.
'Thou'lt not resign me?

'*Dem.* Not to Jove.'

Erix. Then strike.

Dem. How can I strike? [*Gazing on her with astonish-*
Stab in the face of Heav'n? *ment.*]

How can I strike? Yet how can I forbear?
I feel a thousand deaths debating one.

'A deity stands guard on every charm,
'And strikes at me.

'*Erix.* As will thy brother soon:
'He's now in arms, and may be here this hour.

- ' Nothing so cruel as too soft a soul ;
 ' This is strange tenderness that breaks my heart,
 ' Strange tenderness that dooms to double death :
 ' To Perseus.
 ' *Dem.* True—But how to shun that horror ?
 ' By wounding thee, whom savage pards would spare ?
 ' My heart's inhabitant ! my soul's ambition !
 ' By wounding thee, and bathing in thy blood ;
 ' That blood illustrious, thro' a radiant race
 ' Of kings and heroes, rolling down from gods !
 ' *Erix.* Heroes and kings, and gods themselves, must
 ' To dire necessity. [yield
 ' *Dem.* Since that absolves me,
 ' Stand firm and fair.
 ' *Erix.* My bosom meets the point,
 ' Than Perseus far more welcome to my breast.
 ' *Dem.* Necessity, for gods themselves too strong,
 ' Is weaker than thy charms. [Drops the dagger.
 ' *Erix.* Oh, my Demetrius !
 [Turns, and goes to the farther part of the stage.]
 ' *Dem.* Oh, my Erixene ! *[Both silent, weep, and tremble.]*
 ' *Erix.* Farewel ! *[Going.]*
 ' *Dem.* Where goest ? *[Passionately seizing her.]*
 ' *Erix.* To seek a friend.
 ' *Dem.* He's here.
 ' *Erix.* Yes, Perseus' friend——
 ' Earth, open and receive me.
 ' *Dem.* Heav'n strike us dead,
 ' And save me from a double suicide,
 ' And one of tenfold death.——O Jove ! O Jove !
 [Falling on his knees.]
 ' But I'm distracted. *[Suddenly starting up.]*
 ' What can Jove ? Why pray ?
 ' What can I pray for ?
 ' *Erix.* For a heart.
 ' *Dem.* Yes, one
 ' That cannot feel. Mine bleeds at every vein.
 ' Who never lov'd, ne'er suffer'd ; he feels nothing,
 ' Who nothing feels but for himself alone ;
 ' And when we feel for others, reason reels,
 ' O'erloaded, from her path, and man runs mad.
 ' As love alone can exquisitely bless,

‘ Love only feels the marvellous of pain ;
 ‘ Opens new veins of torture in the soul,
 ‘ And wakes the nerve where agonies are born.
 ‘ E’en Dymas, Perseus, (hearts of adamant !)
 ‘ Might weep these torments of their mortal foe.’

Erix. ‘ Shall I be less compassionate than they ?’

[*Takes up the dagger.*

What love deny’d, thine agonies have done ;

[*Stabs herself.*

Demetrius’ sigh outstrings the dart of death.

[*Enter the King, &c.*

King. Give my Demetrius to my arms ; I call him
 To life from death, to transport from despair.

Dem. See Perseus’ wife ! [*Pointing to Erix.*] let De-
 lia tell the rest.

King. My grief-accustom’d heart can guess too well.

Dem. That fight turns all to guilt, but tears and death.

King. Death ! Who shall quell false Perseus, now in
 Who pour my tempest on the capitol ?

[*arms ?*

How shall I sweeten life to thy sad spirit ?——

I’ll quit my throne this hour, and thou shalt reign.

Dem. You recommend that death you would dissuade ;
 Ennobled thus by fame and empire lost,
 As well as life !——Small sacrifice to love.

[*Going to stab himself, the King runs to prevent him,
 but too late.*

King. Ah, hold ! nor strike thy dagger thro’ my heart !

Dem. ’Tis my first disobedience, and my last. [*Falls.*

King. There Philip fell ! There Macedon expir’d !

I see the Roman eagle hovering o’er us,

And the shaft broke, should bring her to the ground.

[*Pointing to Dem.*

Dem. Hear, good Antigonus, my last request.

Tell Perseus, if he’ll sheath his impious sword

Drawn on his father, I’ll forgive him all ;

Tho’ poor Erixene lies bleeding by.

Her blood cries vengeance.—But my father’s peace——

[*Dies.*

King. As much his goodness wounds me, as his death.

‘ What then are both ?——O, Philip, once renown’d !

‘ Where is the pride of Greece, the dread of Rome,

‘ The theme of Athens, the wide world’s example,

F

‘ And

‘ And the god Alexander’s rival now ?
 ‘ E’en at the foot of fortune’s precipice,
 ‘ Where the slave’s sigh wafts pity to the prince,
 ‘ And his omnipotence cries out for more.

‘ *Ant.* As the swoln column of ascending smoke,
 ‘ So solid swells thy grandeur, pigmy man !

‘ *King.* My life’s deep tragedy was plann’d with art,
 From scene to scene advancing in distress,
 Thro’ a sad series, to this dire result ;
 As if the Thracian queen conducted all,
 And wrote the moral in her children’s blood ;
 (Which seas might labour to wash out in vain.)
 Hear it, ye nations ! distant ages, hear ;
 And learn the dread decrees of Jove to fear :
 His dread decrees the strictest balance keep ;
 The father groans, who made a mother weep ;
 But if no terror for yourselves can move,
 Tremble, ye parents, for the child ye love ;
 For your Demetrius : Mine is doom’d to bleed,
 A guiltless victim for his father’s deed. [Exeunt.

END of the FIFTH ACT.



AN HISTORICAL EPILOGUE.

*AN Epilogue, thro' custom, is your right,
But ne'er perhaps was needful till this night ;
To-night the virtuous falls, the guilty flies,
Guilt's dreadful close our narrow scene denies.*

*In history's authentic record read
What ample vengeance gluts Demetrius' shade :
Vengeance so great, that when his tale is told,
With pity some, even Perseus may behold.*

*Perseus surviv'd, indeed, and fill'd the throne ;
But ceaseless cares, in conquest made him groan.
Nor reign'd he long ; from Rome swift thunder flew,
And headlong from his throne the tyrant threw :
Thrown headlong down, by Rome in triumph led,
For this night's deed, his perjur'd bosom bled.
His brother's ghost each moment made him start,
And all his father's anguish rent his heart.*

*When rob'd in black his children round him hung,
And their rais'd arms in early sorrow wrung ;
The younger smil'd, unconscious of their woe ;
At which thy tears, O Rome ! began to flow,
So sad the scene : what then must Perseus feel,
To see Jove's race attend the victor's wheel :
To see the slaves of his worst foe encrease,
From such a source !—An emperor's embrace.
He sickn'd soon to death, and, what is worse,
He well deserv'd, and felt the coward's curse ;
Unpity'd, scorn'd, insulted his last hour,
Far, far from home, and in a vassal's power.
His pale cheek rested on his shameful chain,
No friend to mourn, no flatterer to feign.
No suit retards, no comfort sooths his doom,
And not one tear bedews a monarch's tomb.
Nor ends it thus—dire Vengeance to compleat,
His ancient empire falling, shares his fate.
His throne forgot ! His weeping country chain'd !
And nations ask—Where Alexander reign'd.
As public woes a prince's crimes pursue,
So, public blessings are his virtue's due.
Shout, Britons, shout ! Auspicious fortune blest !
And cry, Long live—our title to success !*



